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THE CREATION OF CHARACTER IN LITERATURE

by John Galsworthy

EDITOR'S NOTE:—*The following is the full text of the much-discussed address delivered by John Galsworthy as the Romanes Lecture for 1931. It will be published later in book form by the Oxford University Press.*

THE whole question of character-creation is mysterious, perhaps more mysterious to one who creates character than to those who smile or sniff under the creation; the process has no dossier, is devoid of documentation, and resists precise definition. Whether in literature or in life, creation has the same baffling inscrutability, and offers the same opportunities for talking without the book.

But the theme is chosen because its selector suspects, in common with not a few other people of the older fashion, that vitality of character-creation is the key to such permanence as may attach to the biography, the play, and the novel.

Before coming, however, to the process of creation, it is well to touch on what may be called the "make-up" of the creative mind. This lecturer is no philosopher—that being whom Oxford, with its tendency to Greek roots, brought one up to credit with a love of wisdom, but who Life has forced one to conclude is rather a lover of intellectual exercise, and the framer of conclusions where conclusion is unattainable; for, considered over a wide enough span of time, philosophies are like the fashion of ladies' clothes, which appear absolute until by a new dash of the Parisian intellect they are shown to be relative.

Being no philosopher, then, this lecturer advances suspicions rather than conclusions. He suspects the substratum of the human being to be energy, or whatever the fashion of the moment calls it, identical with the energy of which everything else alive is made, so that it has basic touch with every other living thing, and sympathetically receives the impacts therefrom. Such impacts form that sum of experience which furnishes the individual's subconscious mind. In the human being those impacts are so infinitely many that we seem each of us to be a complete reservoir of sub-

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conscious experience, a secret storehouse of first-hand contacts, sights, sounds, scents, tastes, and of impressions at second hand. If one can imagine the catacombs at Rome, or the old cellars under the Adelphi, stored to the brim with photographic films, one has perhaps some notion of what the human subconscious mind is like. Every minute, every second indeed of our existences, adds to recorded experience, stacked and piled and ready to be drawn on.

The lecturer, then, suspects that what we call our conscious or directive minds are normally only able to make a very limited and severely practical selective use of the treasures in our cellars, and that what we know as the creative gift in literature, or indeed in any art, is a more than normal power in certain people for dipping into the storehouse and fishing up the odds and ends of experience, together with a special aptitude for welding or grouping those odds and ends when they are fished up.

More fluidly, perhaps, one may think of the subconscious mind as a sort of lava of experience, over which the conscious mind has formed in a crust more or less thin, and more or less perforated by holes through which the lava bubbles. And we may think of what we loosely call creative genius as a much more than normal perforation of the crust, combined with a very high aptitude for shaping the emergent lava into the characters of fiction, into pictures, music, or what not. So much, vaguely and tritely, for the "make-up" of the creative mind.

In considering the actual process of character-creation, let us approach by way of its least mysterious and recreative side, biography. Once on a time in that venerable and vocal institution for putting us in our right places—the Oxford Union—a certain brilliant biographer inaugurated a debate on "the growth of superfluous biography". Since we may be sure that he was not merely alluding to biographies not written by himself, we may suppose that he was thinking of those biographies which do not bring the dead to life. Possibly he proved his point, and birth-control for biographers has since been established; but possibly not, for the creative instincts of literary folk are incorrigible. But let us assume, with him, that biography is only worth while if it creates, or rather re-creates character. Now, the task of a biographer is the clothing of a skeleton already in the cupboard; and, speaking from the creative point of view, the pre-existence of the skeleton is more than half his battle. The liberties which can be taken with enduring and unmalleable bones, without incurring a sort of Egyptian curse, are inconsiderable. A biographer may crook a leg, leave out some teeth, or slightly curve the spine, and still escape from Nemesis; the main set and structure he must preserve or die violently. A certain backbone of facts lies at the base of a task which is perhaps more analogous to the creation of character by a portraitist in oils than to the creation of character by a writer of fiction. Having, then, fetched his skeleton from its cupboard, dusted it, and put it into a north light, the biographer will proceed to drape, first muscle, tissue and skin, and then such garments as may appeal to his aestheticism or sense of decency—not always the same thing. From innumerable documents, or the absence of them, he will draw his clothing conclusions; and it will be seen at once that his work is infinitely more concerned with his conscious than with his subconscious mind. That, indeed, is the second great difference between the biographer and the novelist. The biographer is throughout in conscious control, the novelist in conscious subjection to the sporadic irruptions of his subconsciousness.

In an experimental epoch, such as this, it has occurred to certain enterprising spirits to attempt a blending of biography and fiction, and to produce what may be called biographic plays or novels. The figure of someone who has ruffled through the past is taken, with a specious reverence for certain facts,

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and clothed in fancy dress. The result is frequently agreeable to the reader, and pleasing to the pride and prejudice of the creator; but a caveat should be entered. For if there be any value in history, as some people have been known to assert, this dressing-up of the sober dead, that they may dance to the pipes of fancy, is somewhat perilous. The historical novel has its dangers, as those well know who have read Dumas and rejected thereafter any mere *terre à terre* version of the French history of that period; but the biographic novel is more dangerous still. The historical novel is recognized from birth as a gay Lothario, but the biographic novel or play is a deliberate and subtle seducer in a Puritan's cloak. And one, who has ever preferred the plain cooking of fowls in their own flavouring juices to sauced-up versions, is bound to note, in passing, the will-o'-the-wisp quality of this particular form of character-creation. The virtues in a biographer which most excite admiration are the industrious fidelity with which he unearths the significant relative minutiae from the long or round barrows of history; and the lively but sober selective judgement with which he attaches them to the skeleton, framing out for our eyes an image which we feel to be as near the original as the biographer in limpid sincerity has been able to achieve. A biographer's temperament must in every case colour to some degree the re-created figure of his hero. But the less his temperament deviates the natural colours of the re-creation, the greater the achievement. In a sense the biographer's art is as much the art of criticism as of creation, and true criticism has a certain divine detachment, a devotion to truth, at the expense of, rather than to the gratification of, the critic's self. This is why the good critic and the good biographer are almost as rare as the unicorn.

The good biographer, like the good portraitist in oils, must be made of sponge and of steel. All must he absorb, and all sieve, and then must have at once constructive sympathy, and resistant power of the finest temper. Himself he must resist, curb both his sense of the ludicrous and his sentimental impulses, yet withal keep warm and colourful. The Public, past and present, he must resist—its prejudices and predilections. Even, as a rule, his publisher and his own pocket he must resist. It is true that the biographer has not, like the portrait-painter, to resist the magnetic current emanating from one sitting in a flesh which revolts from being unfavourably, or shall we say truthfully, portrayed; but he has, not uncommonly, to steel himself against the susceptibilities of ancestor worship. In fact, when we contemplate the lions in the path of the biographer, we need not wonder if he is sometimes eaten, and not infrequently lost in the jungle. When looking at a portrait by some Old Master, at Holbein's Sir Thomas More or Rafael's Inghirami, where nothing has been blinked, not even a wandering eye, and no itch to startle or to innovate has been yielded to, one feels what an instinctive and passionate reverence for truth has animated the painter. The character that he has brought to life out of his long and eager contemplation of the original compels from us a kind of worship. We often hear the argument advanced—indeed, one has advanced it oneself, for in this world consistency is no more prevalent than the nightingale west of Exeter—that it does not matter whether a portrait is a portrait; the sitter will die and the picture remain, and nobody will know whether or not it was a good likeness, but only whether it is a good picture. That is perfectly true. On the other hand, if a portrait is not an attempt to re-create the sitter, why call it a portrait, and attach the sitter's name to it? Surely, on the whole, a portraitist is more sensibly governed by the re-creative adherence to truth which animates the best biographers; for he is at least as much tempted, by other considerations, to diverge. Vandyk—in many of whose portraits a certain agreeable composure, not unconnected with

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ruffles, is apparent, to the detriment of individuality—Vandyk we must admire when, as in his Petworth portrait of the Earl of Northumberland, he shakes himself free for the re-creation of the depths of character and mood.

That picture is illustrative of the struggle between God and Mammon which perpetually engrosses portrait-painter or biographer. It was painted by Vandyk, while Northumberland was languishing in the Tower. The bearded face is to one side, leaning on a hand, and the painter has imparted to it the long-suffering melancholy of prisoners and captives, together with the individual quality of the sitter. But even in this faithful picture, as if conscious of the dubious favour with which such a presentment of a nobleman would be received, Vandyk has restored confidence by placing the drooped figure against the background of a red velvet curtain, not precisely the normal garniture of prisons. Gazing at good portraits of people one has known best, one is ever more astonished at the deep reality and inwardness of being that can be revived for us by an artist who can feel, and see, and be faithful to his impressions. The same sort of true reflection is achieved in such a biographical study as Edmund Gosse's *Father and Son*, in George Trevelyan's Garibaldi books, in O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*. The secret of the best biography, as of the best portraiture, lies in a magical blending of sympathy and criticism. When Gainsborough painted his little daughters that they might dwell forever catching butterflies, hand in hand, in summertime, he gave us a perfect illustration of the touching beauty that may breathe in the art of re-creation; when Boswell wrote his *Life of Johnson* he revealed to us the amazing possibilities of intimacy in that art.

Enough on a phase of character-creation beyond the lecturer's personal experience. Let us pass, to trouble that at least he wots of—the creation of character as exemplified in plays and novels.

Some few years ago an industrious person, labouring in the vineyards of categorical knowledge, addressed a questionnaire to a number of well-known dramatists. He wished, lest there should be untidiness in this matter, to know exactly how they wrote their plays. Such answers as he received probably came from such as in writing plays fit characters to the plots thereof. And that, let it be said at once, is the chief pitfall before the dramatist, in so far as the creation of character is concerned. Is it conceivable that characters can live if pinned to the dictates of the set scenario? Admitting that a dramatist should know the trend and ending of his drama before he sits down to write it, he will be ill advised if he does not give his characters every chance to dictate to him, within that limit. For, even then, he is not so free as the novelist, and, if an inquiry were taken over the whole range of plays and novels, the surviving creations of character in novels would far outnumber those in plays. One might almost say that plays are recalled as plays, and novels by the characters in them. To a rule such as this there are outstanding exceptions, and those plays which have achieved real fame are usually associated with pre-eminent character-creation. The conspicuous example of Shakespeare in this respect leaps to the eye. But Shakespeare had in him the makings of a great novelist before, as it were, the novel was born. Malory and the early romanticists come rather under the heading of fabulists; and, though Cervantes was Shakespeare's contemporary, the forms of expression in England at that time were emphatically the poem and the drama. Let us not, then, embarrass Shakespeare further by inscribing the word novelist on his chameleon's coat, lest we tempt some bright spirit to prove that Cervantes wrote him in his leisure moments by way of learning English. Unquestionably Shakespeare's greatest gift was his peerless command of words. He was, first and foremost, poet; but in character-creation he certainly followed a brooding and

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whimsical method, served continually by the subconscious mind, far more symptomatic of the novelist than the playwright. The instinctive looseness of his form is further evidence in the same direction.

If Shakespeare had not chanced to be an actor, or at least intimately connected with dramatic enterprise, he might well have innovated the character novel in this country, and taken precedence of Cervantes as the first great realistic novelist. Shakespeare is the trump card of those who hold that, without an intimate and practical knowledge of the stage, no one can write an honest-to-God play. That is one of those half-truths which people are for ever desirous of converting into the whole. Its converse is the conviction that what is vital in the theatre comes into it on a side wind. Either rule can be proved speciously with the usual equivalent exceptions. The point is immaterial for the purpose of this address, but it brings one conveniently to the second great drawback to character-creation in drama—the physical limitation, set by a stage, to the dramatist's creative freedom. A dramatist, of course, can let character hold sway and trust to luck—that is, indeed, the strength of the side-wind theory. But, though such disregard of the stage may forward the vitality of character-creation, it will probably drive the producer to distraction. Almost inevitably the dramatist does think of this physical limitation. To think of it is called "Obeying the rules of your medium", and is the strength of the theory that close knowledge of the stage is essential to the writing of the real play. Shakespeare certainly knew his medium, and, as certainly, disregarded it more freely than anyone before or since. He can hardly be cited to prove anything. But, putting ourselves into the place of one who is trying to imagine a new being with the attributes and qualities of the full-blooded human creature, we shall soon see how galling and repressive it is to have to remember that our fancy man or woman can only do this or that owing to the limitations of a time and space which cannot be enlarged. Here, incidentally, is one of the advantages which the film has over the stage play; such an advantage, however, does not countervail the loss caused to the dramatist's creations by shadow representation, in place of representation by flesh and blood.

And this brings up the third great drawback to character-creation in plays. The dramatist cannot but be conscious that his characters are much at the mercy of their impersonators. Except perhaps in his first play, he will not easily avoid the feeling that, however intensely he may use his imagination, the imagined creature will not come out on the stage as he imagined it. There is no such thing as ideal casting; casting is a question of more or less right representation. And knowledge of this induces in the playwright a certain looseness of conception and workmanship in order that the garments of character may fit a greater selection of impersonators. Some dramatists are so acutely conscious of this particular limitation that they merely create rôles for selected players. This is to super-observe the rules of the medium in which they work, and the process cannot be dignified with the label "character-creation".

The stage, in fact, inclines the creative writer to the fashioning of types rather than of individuals. Falstaff is perhaps the greatest exception to this rule. We think of the gorgeous old ruffian first and last as a private person, without attaching to him any particular phase of human character, as we attach violence to Lear, jealousy to Othello, unscrupulous decision to Lady Macbeth, and wrongly perhaps, dreaming indecision to Hamlet. In the making of Falstaff—who, by the way, is very much a novelist's creation—Shakespeare gave full rein to his personal enjoyment, and from his enjoyment our own has been distilled. The subconscious mind had almost full command over the process; the sense of direction is lacking, or rather

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veiled from us. We might, indeed, label Falstaff "amorality personified"; but that is a literary afterthought. We swallow him first, huge morsel though he be, as we swallow life itself, amorphous and tasty, and ask for more.

One has called in doubt the type quality of Hamlet. Literary fashion takes him to be the antithesis of Don Quixote—as dreamer to knight-errant; as man of thought to man of action. Does the text really bear out this convenient apposition? Hamlet is rather another illustration of a dramatist's surrender to the novelist's introspective and luxurious method, almost wholly controlled by the subconscious mind ministering to the creator's dominant mood at the moment. So subtle, so varied and elastic is the figure of Hamlet, that no one seems able to make a failure in the part. The great Hamlet, indeed, may be rare; the good Hamlet is a matter of course.

Let Hamlet bring us to the most fertile and important phase of this theme—the creation of character in novels.

This is without doubt the least trammelled and most subconsciously inspired form of character-creation. The novelist needs but a quiet spot, some ink, some writing paper, and his own brooding energy to create that which may live but a season or endure for a century. Such complete independence renders his task at once the most attractive and yet the hardest and most mysterious. There are for him no adventitious aids, neither the handy skeleton, nor the unhandy sitter. No set scenes or dubious impersonators influence and deflect his imagination. In considering the process which the novelist follows, a question at once presents itself. Whence does he start? Does he consciously or subconsciously draw from life? Each novelist must answer that question in his own way, nor will his answer satisfy.

Speaking as one who has been trying to write novels of character over a period of more than thirty years, the lecturer can make no real contribution to precision. To this day he knows not how he begins, or why, or how he goes on; he is only sure that there is no rule, and that the process of character-creation varies not only from novelist to novelist, but even in himself. The nearest approach to a common formula may be attained in some such words as these: a real incident, or person, impinges sharply on a receptive mood of a novelist's particular nature or temperament; the thing observed and the mood of the observer click, as it were, like two cells clinging together to form the germ-point of creation. To this germ-point are attracted suitable impacts or impressions that have been stored in the subconscious mind, till the germ swells to proportions which demand the relief of expression, and in written words the novelist proceeds to free himself. The opening sentences describing a character are usually suggested by observation from life. If the observation be conscious the description will probably be altered very soon; but whether altered or not, the character will tend to diverge from the original model so rapidly that if the creator desires to keep to an observed type, he will have to resort continually to in-breeding by constant reintroduction of the original traits. That profound instinct for the breeding of blood-stock implanted in every English breast will assist us in understanding how a novelist, in the creation of his characters, selects certain salient human traits, and continually reinforces them; just as the blood-stock breeder selects certain strains of blood and gets as many crosses of them as he can without falling into the snare of too close in-breeding. But in spite of this breeding to type, everything done, or said, or felt by the character, when once it begins to live, will take it a little farther from the original model. And, normally speaking, this is what the novelist welcomes, because characters sedulously drawn from life are for obvious reasons undesirable.

Turgenev, one of the most conscious yet exquisite of novelists, has left record of how he

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created the character of Bazarov. During a train journey he met, talked with, and observed a young doctor, who struck him as a new type. The journey—as journeys will—came to an end, and he never saw the young man again. But the impression on Turgenev was such that he set to work to conceive this young man's way of life and thought in the form of a diary. He kept this diary for months, as he imagined the young doctor himself might have written it, till he believed he knew how that young man would feel and act in all circumstances; he then began to write his novel *Fathers and Children*, making the young doctor, whom he named Bazarov, the principal character. Bazarov called himself a "Nihilist", an expression at once universally adopted to nickname the new type Russia was producing in those days. This example of highly conscious character-creation stands out in thoroughness and direct motivity; but only a great selective artist could have followed with success so formal a method.

The vitality and freedom of character-creation derive, as a rule, from the subconscious mind instinctively supplying the conscious mind with the material it requires. In attempting an illustration of that process you must forgive my being personal for a moment. I sink into my morning chair, a blotter on my knee, the last words or deed of some character in ink before my eyes, a pen in my hand, a pipe in my mouth, and nothing in my head. I sit. I don't intend; I don't expect; I don't even hope. I read over the last pages. Gradually my mind seems to leave the chair, and be where my character is acting or speaking, leg raised, waiting to come down, lips opened ready to say something. Suddenly, my pen jots down a movement or remark, another, another, and goes on doing this, haltingly, perhaps, for an hour or two. When the result is read through it surprises one by seeming to come out of what went before, and by ministering to some sort of possible future. Those pages, adding tissue to character, have been supplied from the store-cupboard of the subconscious, in response to the appeal of one's conscious directive sense, and in service to the saving grace of one's theme, using that word in its widest sense. The creation of character, however untrammelled and unconscious, thus has ever the guidance of what, perhaps, may best be called the "homing instinct".

An expression frequently used concerning books: "The character of so and so took charge", is true enough without being the whole truth. For a character can obviously never outrun the limits of his "creator's" nature, nor take him beyond his secret sense of shape. Even if that sense of shape be only a glorification of the shapeless, it is still there, and beyond it character will not set foot.

The case of Bazarov, already quoted, serves to illustrate also the extremely intimate connection between character and story. Story in what we may call the conscience-stricken novel is just character highly and variously lighted. Turgenev's theme in *Fathers and Children* is the apposition, and indeed opposition, of the younger to the older generation. His perception of a new type in the young doctor whom he met in the train supplied him not only with the desire to create the character Bazarov, but with the theme or suitable environment in which to create him. The continual contrast between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza supplied Cervantes with the theme of his masterpiece. The plot of Turgenev's *Smoke* is wrapped into the form of the passion-inspiring Irina; the plot of Balzac's greatest novel into the doting figure of *Père Goriot*. We cannot conceive the long romance of Dumas's Musketeer series without the adventurous centrality of D'Artagnan's presence; of *The Pickwick Papers* without the benevolent presidency of Mr. Pickwick; or of Stevenson's *Kidnapped* and *Catriona* without the apposition between Lowlands and Highlands implicit in the forms of David Balfour and Alan Breck. But there is another side to this moon, well illus-

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trated by that very great novel, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. There, indeed, the panorama of life disclosed is so vast that even the leading characters seem subordinate. Nor has one the feeling in Tolstoy's other masterpiece, *Anna Karenina*, that the theme is more centred in Anna than in Levin.

Some early words in this lecture suggested that the permanence of a novel, a play, a biography, depends on the vitality of the characters therein. Let us narrow this issue down to the novel. Very few novels outlive their own generation; and of such survivors the majority live on merely as works dignified and popular in their time, the names on whose outsides are remembered, but whose insides are only examined by the scholar, or the person stranded in a remote hotel. The few novels of old times to which we still turn with gusto are almost always those in which a character or characters have outlived their period. How far would Thackeray be known today but for Becky Sharp, Major Pendennis, Colonel Newcome, Harry Foker, Esmond, Beatrice, and Barry Lyndon? How far would Trollope but for Mrs. Proudie? With Dickens we associate practically nothing now but a galleyful of strangely living creatures. George Eliot retains precarious foothold through her children, Silas Marner, Adam Bede, and Hetty. The character-creations of Jane Austen still keep her memory fresh despite her unending parochialism. Except to the student of style Flaubert lives but in Madame Bovary and the old maid of *Cœur simple*. Fielding would be forgotten but for Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews, and Sophia. One can hardly indeed say that such books as *A Sentimental Journey*, *Cranford*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Treasure Island*, and *Huckleberry Finn* survive by reason of character-creation. They live, and will ever live, from having been pickled in bright spirit.

But such exceptions prove a rule which seems important to the future, because the last few years have shown a tendency in the novel to forsake individualism for a kind of communism; to abandon the drama of individual character, exhibited under high light and high pressure, in favour of a well-nigh scientific exposition of the species, human being: the feelings, thoughts, tendencies, foibles, and amenities of *homo* more or less *sapiens* are turned over and over for our inspection with amazing skill and industry, but without any intention to set him on his legs as an individual. The species as a whole has become the novelist's love, or object of detestation, rather than selected specimens of the species. The experiment is extremely interesting—especially to those who are making it. It has a vogue. And yet there are certain primary reasons why the creation of individual character as the chief motive and function of the novelist may never be adequately replaced by the pursuit of fine writing, verbal dialectics, vibrational reproductions of life, or even by these subtle expositions of the generalized human soul. There is, for instance, a deep craving in most of us to have interest in oneself from time to time replaced by interest in the self of another. This craving is satisfied by the creation of character in fiction much more frequently and soothingly than by real folk, even one's own friends and relatives. Again most of us deeply crave to see ourselves reproduced, more or less, in the characters we read of, and to judge ourselves by them. Dissection of the generalized human being supplies us with information, but gives us no outline sharp enough for comparison with our own. The unending moral assessment which is so deep a part of the life of a human being is more furthered and furnished by the character-creations of fiction than most of us realize. One could not say that consciousness of this should guide a novelist, for if it did he would make a failure of his characters. But, when his task is finished, it is always comforting to a novelist to know that by the creation of character he contributes to the organic growth of human ethics. If, indeed, a novelist has any use in the world apart from affording entertain-

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ment, it is through the revealing power of his created characters.

One has come to the run-in without hope of breasting the tape, for the inexplicable has still to be explained. What makes a character endure? Or conversely: What makes so many of them die? At the end of every publishing season fictional characters are bunched like autumn flies waiting to drop dead. Presently Time, the housemaid, comes round with a brush, sweeps them off the wall, opens the window and decants them into the winter jessamine. Many of them have died of being "interesting" or "strangely moving"—those convenient but fatal words! Some, too big for their boots, and harassed by corns, have rushed to a violent end. A few, not many nowadays, have perished of a surfeit of sugar. A considerable number, too fond of their creators, have fallen into religious ecstasy and committed *felo de se*. And the rest, having spent their days trying to collect themselves, have simply given it up.

In those few character-creations which endure is a quality which can best, perhaps, be described as homespun yet vital; they are vivid from ever revealing themselves without seeming to. If one had to give the palm to a single factor in the creation of character, it would be to sly, dry humour. The sort of humour which produced the Don and Sancho, Falstaff, Major Pendennis, Becky Sharp, Sam Weller, Micawber, Betsy Trotwood, Stepan Arcadyewitch, and Mrs. Proudie. But such a quality is rather a shaping instrument than the mainspring of enduring character-creation. What the mainspring itself is remains mysterious. Call it, if you will, vital spark, "breath of life". One thing is sure: The enduring characters in literature are ever such as have kicked free of swaddling clothes and their creators. They toddle and strut, and hale you with them into the streets, the fields, the sands, and waters of their private pilgrimages, that you may see their stars and share their troubles, laugh with them, love with them, draw with them the breath of their defiances, suffer in their struggles, float out with them into the unconscious when their night comes.

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L. A. G. STRONG

by Dayton Kohler

In 1921, shortly after his graduation from Oxford, L. A. G. Strong published his first small book of poems. *Dublin Days* was a distinguished first volume, revealing a poet with a sensitive perception of the natural world and a dramatic skill in his use of lusty, homely legend and his portrayal of rustic characters. Three more volumes of poetry followed, but it was not until the appearance of a novel, *Dewer Rides,* in 1929 that the writer received wider recognition than that accorded to a minor *genre* poet. Four books by L. A. G. Strong—novels, short stories and critical essays—are being published in America this year. At a time when the book trade has fallen to low ebb, this fact alone testifies to his increasing importance in the ranks of younger British writers.

His writing is, in the accepted sense of the word, provincial. Born in Devonshire, of Anglo-Irish parents, he spent his early childhood among the people and scenes that were, in time, to serve as the material for his novels and poems: the villages and farms about Yelverton, on southern Dartmoor, and the Irish countryside between Dublin and Wicklow. During his holidays at Dun Loaghaire, near Dublin, his most constant companion was a lame fisherman—a friendship that brought him into familiar contact with Irish peasant life. Thus he acquired during his impressionable years an understanding of simple people in two widely different cultural backgrounds, and a lasting knowledge of their ways of life and speech.

No figure among the post-war generation of poets and novelists shows greater promise of sustained literary achievement. His vision is the poetic romanticism of the Gael, with an imagination tempered by the disillusionment of the age. Ruggedness and delicate imagery blend in his pages; imaginative fantasy does not escape beyond the bounds of atmosphere and character. The Celtic spirit of his work is subtle and pervasive: the everyday world in which his people move seems lit from within by some poetic impulse that shows in ordinary life the passion and wonder of common things. It is the viewpoint of the poet, and his prose, like his poetry, reflects at once the old and the strange. His novels have dignity and purpose and charm of manner. He writes with the sincerity and courage which mark the true artist.

These qualities are nowhere more apparent than in his recent novel, *The Garden,* a recreation of boyhood impressions and experience in a Dublin suburb during those lost years at the beginning of the century. In his attempt to recapture the spirit of a time and a place, he presents a youthful idyll disturbed and darkened, eventually, by war.

Because of the theme and background of this novel, some comparison with *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is inevitable. Both contain strong autobiographical por-

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traits and an intensely personal impressionism, and the background of both is a prewar Dublin that has now disappeared forever. Here, however, all superficial similarity ends. James Joyce, like his own Stephen Dedalus, reveals a corroding hatred for Dublin as the city of a decaying social system and an atmosphere of futility that warped mind and soul. But to L. A. G. Strong the city remains a place of pleasant recollection; the dirt and sordidness of the slums when viewed through the eyes of a growing boy only serve to make his ventures into mean streets more fascinating, a bright contrast to the ordered decorum of English life. To him, old Dublin was a frowzy, drunken, garrulous fishwife among cities, violent and amusing and generous by turns, shouting ripe obscenities at her more decent neighbors, staggering with a hiccup and a joke into memories of a past era.

It is also plain that Strong, unlike Joyce, is not concerned with the hidden life. That mosaic of surface passions, half-stifled emotions and thought processes by which Joyce carries action forward through shifting mental states is a method of character-development which he leaves to the reader's imagination. The experimental forms of the novel have failed to influence his own work. Life is accepted without explanation. His characters live as private identities; their stories are reconstructed from attitudes and emotions, confidences exchanged, from things they do and say. He stands on the side of John Millington Synge and James Stephens against Joyce and the modern school of psychological fiction. There can be no doubt that the writing of L. A. G. Strong belongs to the Celtic tradition in literature. To state precisely the meaning of this Gaelic spirit would require academic discussion; the less pedantic significance of the term can best be illustrated by a brief consideration of those elements upon which it depends.

One finds primarily the quality of beauty, a pictorial sense easier to indicate than to define. Atmosphere is an elusive element. It consists of a singular rightness of vision, the crystallization of a mood, an appropriateness of background against which characters and action move. Good writing conveys a complete reality only when the writer has given form and substance to the atmosphere in which his people live, when persons and things are viewed within the confines of a separate, closed world. In the average novel we find characters and background existing as two divided units of expression; description is too frequently a mere decorative frieze stretched behind the immediate stage on which the actors move and talk. But in novels like *Dewer Rides* and *The Garden*, where action arises from a subtle communication of mood between man and nature, the elements of experience must be rearranged to provide a full intensity of sensory impressionism. His novels, like *Wuthering Heights* and the Wessex novels of Thomas Hardy, show a consciousness of the internal and external worlds, a realization of dim forces and driving impulses that react between the individual and his environment. It is a moving capture of life; characters and nature merge in a moment of crisis; persons are transformed by the animate presence of the world about them, and the result is a richer and more varied pattern of human experience.

Strong's landscapes are charged with dramatic potentialities. From his books one takes away vivid impressions of his descriptive movements: the wild windy night when Dick Brendon pursued secret phantoms of madness across the darkened moor, clear sunlight upon a rocky sea-wall on that golden afternoon when Dermot Gray caught his first conger-eel, a quiet library where Dermot's grandfather fondled worn volumes of Dickens, changing aspects of weather and light along the rugged Scottish coast, the hushed stirring of Dartmoor spring, when the gorse shows its first pale flare upon thorn-spiked ridges. He shows a keen awareness of life in the spirit and substance of the natural scene:

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"Who can fathom the life of a village? . . . this instantaneous realization of detail and whole together, the old houses, their stones astir in the night, their generations of secrets, and the white teeth of the mice in the wainscot: the carving on the underside of a table done by a boy whose father never found it, though the boy lived years of terror lest he should: the roots pushing eagerly beneath the damp mould in the woods, the stirring of earth's breasts under a plowed field as the winter darkness comes down: horses that become more than horses at night, terrifying a young clergyman who has come along the lane in the unconfessed hope of seeing a girl for a second through her cottage window, making him climb the hedge rather than pass them . . . the lives of the beetles, the woodlice, the terror of the rabbits, the poised alertness of the weasel, the sheep that hang their heads and die of the maggot, the choked endurance of the tree with ivy round its throat: all these and a myriad other things, whether of today or yesterday, simultaneously apprehended and compressed into one act of vision, a single awareness through each sense at once: man's intuition of Omniscience. All this, backwards and forwards, through and roundabout, repeated and reaffirmed in the interacting consciousness of uncounted lives, with heaven knows what forces of nature and what consciousness of stick and stone, is the closest a man can get to the atmosphere of an old village, the spell which takes possession of him and makes him aware of an individuality more than the sum total of what he sees."

Celtic fantasy belongs to that period before European culture found scientific enlightenment, when men believed innocently in divine miracles and the sinister shapes of darkness. Creatures of light and personal demons walked abroad, and man's destiny was guided by unearthly forces with powers for good or evil. Poetry mingled truth with prophecy and mysticism. This was the form of natural magic revived by writers of the Celtic Renaissance at the end of the last century, but L. A. G. Strong has clarified fantasy with the spirit of the age. The fantastic elements in *Dewer Rides* belong to the folk beliefs of a region where Christianity has been grafted but lightly upon the ingrained superstition of the race. Dewer is the primitive, malevolent spirit of the Dartmoor countryside, the demon hunter of rural legend who rides with his pack of hounds through wind and storm in search of souls, so that those who encounter him on his wild ride are forever doomed to violence and destruction. For all aesthetic purposes, however, Dewer must be regarded as a symbol, the dark, secret spirit of bitter earth from which Brendon is never free and which possesses him wholly at the end. In another novel the hero encounters a ghost among pale curtains of mist in a Highland valley, but this frail creature of shy and innocent appeal is, like Dewer, a symbol, the vision of a waking day-dream such as any man might see when his imagination yields to the spirit of the past. Fantasy in *The Garden* is no more than a quality of vision, a candid picture of life viewed with the intuitional wisdom of childhood.

The humour that we find in Strong's work is never inseparable from character. Here he shows his Celtic strain by the use of a full-flavoured speech that holds the tang of homely realism. There is something very laughable and broad, a suggestion of the elemental and eternal, in those characters whom he has touched with the comic spirit. One meets with delight and a sense of amused recognition such figures as Old Michael, the Highland fisherman whose wages were withheld so that his annual spree could be postponed until the end of the summer, or Long Mike Hogan, that rare master of salty epithet, whose only responsibility in life was to attend and persecute meetings of the Salvation Army. A more restrained form of humour makes memorable the scene in which Brendon buys an engagement ring, and the accidental discovery of youthful deception after

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Dermot Gray has yielded to a temptation as old as fishing, buying worthless "stingoes" rather than go home empty-handed.

Few novels of recent years have dramatized life close to the soil so effectively as *Dewer Rides*. The setting is that section of the Dartmoor countryside between Elford Town and Sheepstor, a land of ancient villages and lonely moorland farms, where men and women react most passionately to the old instinctive life which civilization has almost forgotten. Obscure portents shape the life of Dick Brendon, lusty farmer about whom the movement of the story centers. He is a creature of strong passions and blunt humour, and two elements war constantly in his nature, for he was born with the brow of a dreamer and the coarse, stubborn jaw of the peasant. His life is a conflict of opposing natural forces; the dark fatality of earth drives him finally to destruction with mad, resentful insistence.

It is the ride of legendary Dewer through the years of a man's life, the inevitable course of a tortured spirit that man and nature could not tame. Over all there is the haunting presence of the moor, motivating the mood of action like some wild personal malice.

Dick Brendon grows awkwardly into manhood. To those who know him he is a strange boy of stolid independence, deliberate speech, and scowling moods. Eric Grayson, who is delicate, admires his strength; old Pellow Varley, roistering village drunkard, praises his spirit. At first Dick has a patron in Mrs. Grayson. But Eric is a snob in the making and Dick is too simple and honest for flattery. When the boys quarrel he loses all opportunity to be educated as a gentleman; with Pellow he withdraws more deeply into that reckless, hardy life of the past. His love for Ruth Palmer begins as an idyll, but events move them along until they are torn blindly between bitterness and passion, and Ruth, unable to reconcile love with a strict religious training, sends him away with her refusal. The end is tragic; jaw has conquered over brow. For Dick there is one night of demoniac madness, a race with Dewer across stormy moors; after forty years of careless living he dies by act of violence. If there is evil in this story it is the evil of innocence; this we perceive when we see Ruth for the last time, an old woman beyond pity or regret for denying responsibility and love. It is a dark, disturbing book, compact with harsh passions and wonder and a warmth of understanding.

The Jealous Ghost marks an intermediate stage in Mr. Strong's development as a novelist. John Carmichael Stewart, an American of Scottish tradition, returns to visit his ancestral home in the western Highlands. Mhor is a place of strange familiarity to this man who has heard it described in detail many times, and here he meets those English cousins whom he has never seen: Dame Gordon, matriarchal, shrewd, possessive; Charles, her son and the owner of Mhor, complacent, crude; Kathleen McKay, cheerful and kind, and her husband, Ellis, a boisterous, plain-spoken genius. But there is still his debt to the past, a shadowy ghost hovering jealously over the beauty and contentment of the present. One day he wanders down a lost, fog-dimmed path and there meets a pale wraith who is to draw him more and more into the spirit of the place. The romance of his quiet middle-age is his love for another, more remote, cousin, but his dreams at night are filled with visions of a ghost with pale, clear face who beckons to him from a place of magic twilight. He loses the girl he loves and pays his debt to the past.

The richness of *The Jealous Ghost* lies in a series of vivid pictures by which the spirit of a time and a place is brought warmly to life. The country about Mhor is shown with exact and delicate care: the old stone house, Craig Mhor, raising its hump high over stretches of tussocky peat, the wild, rocky coast with its islands and bracken-covered headlands. John Stewart views these scenes

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under all changing effects of weather and time, in the gray mists of morning when moisture dripped from the pine trees and mountains loomed darkly through the fog, in clear sunlight, in the blue envelopment of early dusks, and through one amazing night when the "dancers" filled the northern horizon with a boreal display. The spirit of Mhor is everywhere apparent; when Charles Gordon is stabbed by the young halfwit it is as if the land has revenged itself upon one who would deface its natural beauty. Here nature predominates and people are governed by its moods.

The difficulties inherent in the writing of *The Garden* are obvious. On the one hand there is James Joyce's achievement with similar materials in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* and on the other a knowledge that stories of children fall too easily into patronizing humour or easy sentimentality. The qualities which make this novel a book of rare and rich experience are the writer's exquisite, unspoiled perceptions of childhood and his memories of a lost world which delighted a young boy. Behind this tale of pleasant reminiscence there is a subtle contrast of backgrounds and characters, and this blending of temperamental differences of race and culture gives a more tangible flavour and substance to his biographical novel.

Dermot Gray is Irish, although his home is in England, and he spends his summer holidays with his grandparents in an old house near Dublin. Here for a few weeks each year his growth rises to a new level of knowledge and experience; during these holiday periods he makes new decisions, fights his battles, ventures tentatively into life, and acquires a knowledge of his own particular world. He is only a small boy when he arrives for the first time with his mother and nurse and baby sister. In his childish imagination the garden behind his grandfather's house is an enchanted place that he confuses with stories of the Garden of Eden, an immense enclosure for fruit and flowers over which the grim Mr. Caggen, enemy of all prowling cats, presides. The garden is also the home of Paddy-monkey, Dermot's chief delight, and during that summer he and his grandfather's pet become close friends. By another summer the monkey has become old and vicious; when it is sent away to the zoo he knows that his heart will break. The loss of his playmate takes Dermot into the world beyond the garden. On the waterfront where he goes to fish his friends are three picturesque loafers. Paddy Kennedy becomes his guide and protector. Peg-leg O'Shea is a mild man with no worse vice than laziness. Long Mike Hogan is a despairing zealot whose chief mission in life is to break up meetings of the Salvation Army with a monotonous chant of obscene insult. These cronies are folk-myths made articulate, hastening Dermot's initiation into life's darker mysteries. As he grows older his more constant companions are Con and Eileen, cousins.

His experiences during those years were commonplace but never dull. Certain episodes stand out with vivid narrative interest; the breathless excitement that Dermot found in spearing his first conger-eel; the shooting of Lord Spencer, most daring of all marauding cats; his shy regard for Mona, tender worship that was spared the trials of actual acquaintance; the thrill and horror of a motorcycle crash. The life that seemed too good in those days is regarded darkly through the looking glass in a brief epilogue. Death and the war have intervened. Dermot's sister, his cousin Eileen, and an aunt are the only survivors of those almost forgotten years.

Memory and imagination combine to preserve a record of those transient impressions in which we find beauty but to which we cannot return. If *The Garden* is not a great novel, it is at least a very rare book, exquisitely written, and a promise of finer things to come.

The best of L. A. G. Strong's short stories are represented in the collection *The English*

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Captain. Here, as in his novels, we find a consciousness of the inner and outer worlds, of the dim pressures that move obscurely behind the world of reality. His shorter narratives have the directness and force of unstudied drama, a presentation of individuals in moments of crisis and change, when human character is most plainly revealed by events and casual observations often trivial in themselves. This is the method of *Travellers*, one of the most delicately perceptive stories of modern times, the record of a boy's impressions of events that contain an unconscious but wholly absorbing drama. In *Storm* the violence and fury of nature find a counterpart in the human soul, and bitterness of misunderstanding is washed away by anger as the earth and sky are cleared by wind and rain.

Nature and people furnish the themes of his poetry. The interests and temper of the poet are revealed in lyric forms which clothe his sensitive perceptions of life in a language of appropriate beauty. Satire and characterization mingle in *Dublin Days,* but there is less drama and greater exaltation of earth in his collection of Dartmoor lyrics, *The Lowery Road*. His latest work is his best. *Difficult Love* and *Northern Light,* two volumes little known in America, speak with a terse vitality of idiom and a unified sense of delicate perception and the salty flavour of common earth. His nature poems contain a vivid imagery that shows the quality of his poetic imagination. He speaks of the dawn "as pale new sunbeams lace the hurrying sea". A twilight mood is communicated by the silence of sea-birds "who will soon be listening to the tingle and whisper of the rain". His character studies range from tragedies of simple life to situations of broadest humour.

The art of L. A. G. Strong transcends a local realism. Beneath a surface fidelity to the spirit of an age and a place—the lonely Dartmoor countryside, Victorian Dublin of thirty years ago—he indicates with swift appraisal those qualities which are changeless in the life of man. To the warmth and colouring of his Celtic heritage he has added a more sober and Anglo-Saxon regard for truth. Romance is never far removed from severest realism. He is never a facile romanticist; his characters are hurled from flights of ecstasy to tragic doom, and these changes in their fortunes are as reasonable, or mysterious, as the process of life itself. Because his vision is that of the poet, perhaps, he is most successful in his portrayal of the young or the very old. His intuitive knowledge of the child's mind is shown in that effective first portion of *Dewer Rides*, in *The Garden*, and in a whimsically amusing short story, *Prongs*. And no writer since Dickens has given us more inimitable portraits of old men; mellow, scholarly old gentlemen like Dermot's grandfather; gruff, humorous, wise rustics; ancient rascals loquacious with inebriate emotions; unrepentant, twisted, quarrelsome old men like Pellow Varley.

English critics have welcomed L. A. G. Strong as a writer of exceptional promise. At the present time his major difficulties are those of form. His novels swing through widening circles of human life and end too abruptly, and a progressive development of several of his central characters has not been sustained from one period of crisis to another. In point of technique *The Garden* marks a great advance over his first novel, but even here the contrast in his tragic epilogue breaks too suddenly upon the consciousness of the reader. Otherwise we must respect the rich variety of his talents, the clear simplicity of his style, the passion and wit and shrewd observation that are the materials of his craft.

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SOVIET WRITERS VIEW AMERICA

by Albert Parry

An American engineer in the Ukraine is one of the chief personages of the newest poem by Alexander Bezimensky, the young poet of Soviet Russia. There are Two Thirsty Americans among the comic heroes of a long serial now running in a Moscow monthly, *Tridzat Dnei* (*Thirty Days*). A Moscow publishing house is having a success with a juvenile thriller on the adventures of a youthful Russian Bolshevik in an American school in the Far East. Two plays by Dmitri Shcheglov, *The Blizzard* and *Nord-Ost,* are among the most popular in the Soviet Russian theatres, and both have a number of American heroes and villains gambolling with their Russian friends and enemies in Siberia and New York. M. Ilin's *New Russia's Primer; The Story of the Five-Year Plan* has a delightful fable of those hectic Americans, Mr. Fox, Mr. Box, Mr. Crox, and Mr. Nox, and their mad-hat factories, with the no less extravagant Mr. Doodle, Mr. Boodle, Mr. Foodle, and Mr. Noodle succeeding them. Since the primer is now a best seller both in America and in Russia, the fable is now as familiar in this country as it is in the land of its origin.

While American business men, engineers and tourists are busily transcribing their Soviet impressions for the benefit of their compatriots at home, the Soviet writers observe these visitors and put them into their own Soviet Russian poems, novels, short stories and plays. The guests and the technical advisers from the States are being described, fictionized, and sometimes caricatured in the new Soviet Russian literature. To use the current Soviet slogan, the Moscow writers have not only caught up with, but already outstripped the New York writers. The latter as yet confine themselves to travel accounts and economic appraisals of new Russia, giving us practically no American poems devoted to the land of the Soviets—if the poems appearing in the *New Masses* are excepted—and no American novels with Soviet Russian heroes—if we exclude Floyd Gibbons's somewhat far-fetched *Red Napoleon*. But the Moscow writers top their travel and economic treatises by a sizable dose of poetry and fiction on America, where praise singularly merges with scorn, and admiration with ridicule, and where English words and entire phrases are used, looking quaint amid the Russian text, the more so since at times they are curiously misspelled or twisted. Thus, Vissarion Sayanov asserts in his poem, *The Cardboard America*, that in America "times is money", and Boris Pilnyak writes of relishing his "lench", but both are outdone by Shcheglov's persistent "boby" when he means "baby" or his curious version of New York's Broadway as "Broadway-Street". There was also Vladimir Mayakovsky with his polite "senk-you". However, none of the post-revolutionary writers has as yet achieved as much ignorance of the English language as the pre-revolutionary Vladimir Korolenko

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who, in one of his stories of America, wrote that "good-bye" was one's greeting on entering a house. Michael Zoshchenko, the celebrated Soviet humorist, once spelled it "goot-bye" and said that it meant: "Keep your eye on my things", but he never pretended to anything but comedy.

II

By no means are Americans and their country new as subjects in Soviet literature. As early as 1918, in his poem *Inonia,* Sergei Yessenin warned America against her faith in the all-importance of her "cast-iron rainbows" of railroads and bridges. He told her that her skyscrapers would not reach the far-off stars. "Do not sing a Te Deum to your wires that radiate like rays." Yessenin, a peasant's son, pictured and praised the Russian revolution—any revolution, for that matter—as a destructive flare of the village against the city and its machine. He was the earliest among the Soviet poets to foresee the American ideal of mechanization capturing the minds of Russian revolutionaries. He protested against it. He hurled passionate denunciations at America, not as the country of capitalism—at first he completely muted this point—but as the country of the hated machine.

But Mayakovsky, the Soviet poet of the city, was frankly enthusiastic about the American skyscraper and the American machine. It was American capitalism that he strove to annihilate in his poems of 1918 and 1919. In his poem "*150,000,000*" he described a nightmarish Chicago with her fourteen thousand streets and with seven hundred lanes running from each street. He said in awe that it took a year for a train to run the length of all these streets and lanes, and that a stranger was perpetually amazed in Chicago. He wrote: "In Chicago, even to arch eyebrows, men use electric power. . . . In Chicago, each inhabitant is no less than a general. . . . His job is to be a loafer and to make merry, with no cares and tasks. . . . Of food there is a wonderful range in Chicago's bars". Mayakovsky placed aero-stations on top of Chicago skyscrapers. He generously distributed luxuries and mechanical wonders throughout the city, reserving the greatest of them for a mythical Chipple-Strong Hotel on Royal Street where, as he wrote, Woodrow Wilson himself resided. Even the B V D's of Mr. Wilson were like sonnets, exclaimed Mayakovsky indignantly, so soft and bewitching they were. But a revolution came to America, led by a huge and brave Russian called Ivan. President Wilson "was dancing a cakewalk wiggling his rear and front" when men and things, including skyscrapers, telegraph poles, cobblestones and trucks, surprised him and his retinue with a fierce uprising. Of course, the revolution triumphed—"over the Rockefellers, lying with their faces down, their throats strangled by their own collars, crushed like cockroaches".

Yet, the early Soviet writers felt their lack of close acquaintanceship with Americans and their country. Russia was cut off from the rest of the world by the civil war and the Allied blockade. Only too seldom did some Americans or the news of America seep through the flaming cordons of Russia. Those Soviet writers who happened to be in Eastern Siberia were more fortunate than their Moscow comrades, for to Eastern Siberia American troops were sent by President Wilson in the troublous days of 1918. Siberian muzhiks rose against the White Guards of Admiral Kolchak. The American soldiers, regarded by the rebels as Kolchak's friends, were drawn into the scuffle—and into the early Soviet Russian fiction.

In Vsevolod Ivanov's *Armored Train #14.69,* a novelette, later staged as a play, we have the unforgettable scene of the capture of an American doughboy by a group of wild-haired Siberian *partizane* (rebels). The doughboy was captured while he and another American soldier were bringing a load of milk to their regiment. His friend was killed in the ambuscade by the muzhiks, but he

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himself managed to raise his hands and surrender. He was brought into the village where a gray-haired peasant shook his head in perplexity: "Aren't these Americans a foolish people! They came to fight, and yet they've got to have their milk and chocolate". The muzhiks were against such a comfortable attitude toward fighting. To them fighting was a serious, bloody business, full of cruelty, typhus and stench, and devoid of comforts and mercy. Accordingly, they decided to execute their American prisoner. The American did not know the Russian language, but from his captors' tone he understood his fate. He was full of mad desire to live, he hated his captors, but he stood at rigid attention before the peasants as if hoping that his obedience would win him a reprieve. Indeed, he was saved—by one of the peasants who used to work in the docks of Vladivostok and had modern Soviet ideas. The peasant made a motion that the American would be more useful to the Soviets alive than dead. The peasant suggested to propagandize the American and then let him loose. The motion was carried. The peasants spoke to the American:

"We aren't bandits, we are instilling order. Your people over the ocean don't know this, it seems. . . . You are good people, you must understand this. You are just as good Christian-peasants as we are. You plough your land, and all that. You and we are quite unlike the Japanese. What is a Jap, really? He eats rice, ha-ha!"

This seemed to be an excellent piece of propaganda. The muzhiks were excited and well pleased with themselves. They were sure they were winning their prisoner over to the Soviet side. They eagerly awaited his answer. But he said, in English, "I don't understand".

The peasants were baffled. Now, what to do? Shall they shoot the American, after all? But no, they will try again. They will try with words and names apt to be international. "Lenin!" cried one of the peasants in a loud voice, as if the American were deaf. And now, to quote the author, "the American's whole body shook, his eyes sparkled, and he joyfully answered: 'There's a chap!'" The author proudly inserted the English phrases of the American in reply to the glad Russian shouts of his captors, "'Soviet Republic!' The American stretched his hands toward the muzhiks, his cheeks jumped up and down, and he cried excitedly: 'That is pretty indeed!'" When the muzhiks yelled, "Proletariat", the American repeated the word, "joyfully stuttering", and pointed to his chest: "We!" The muzhiks were mad with joy. They embraced him, they pawed his uniform, and they shook his hands with all their strength. Naturally, they released him, and another potential member of the American Communist party was evolved then and there.

Besides the soldiers, a few American correspondents managed to get into the early stage of the Russian tumult. They were not uniform in their types and in their attitudes toward the revolution. Soviet writers were quick to discern this difference. Thus, in Soviet literature a surprising variety of American news-gatherers is pictured. There was a bold storm-boy with his great sympathy for the Russian revolution, and so the Soviet opera *John Reed* depicted the American correspondent in Russia as a heroic and lovable figure. But Sergei Tretiakov in his *Roar China*, now familiar to Americans, thanks to the Theatre Guild, presented an American journalist abroad as a despicable scoundrel whose chief thoughts were in money-getting and carnal pleasures. There was a neutral figure as well: Vsevolod Ivanov gave it to us in his fictionized scenes of street fighting and revolutionary demonstrations in Vladivostok. This figure was of an American correspondent who was neither a hero nor a scoundrel, but a cool and colourless man of his profession, somewhat indifferent to the noble passions that fermented around him, interested in them so far as they were good material for his camera and note-book.

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As if feeling that Americans could not be their own unrestrained selves in the non-capitalistic Russia, some of the Soviet Russian writers preferred to write of Americans in China and Western Europe. While Sergei Tretiakov gave us his portraits of American bullies in Shanghai, Alexander Arosev presented an American millionaire on an ugly spree in a German or Latvian city. This American was heavy "as a three-ton truck". He was bored because "each wasted minute seemed a wasted dollar to him". He could stand music only after a good meal and when not sleepy. A Russian girl went into ecstasies over a work of sculpture, but the American remained nonplussed. He shoved his stick into the paw of a bronze lioness and dully mumbled: "Yes, it's of strong construction". He was a glutton, and he was lascivious. He tried to seduce the Russian girl at the point of a revolver, and when she snatched the revolver from him and fled, he represented the incident as the bold raid of a Bolshevik she-agent in his house, and got plenty of sympathy from the bourgeois press, almost persuading himself that he, indeed, was a martyr.

III

The America of crazy money, of gold mining, of detective and prairie adventures began to reassert itself in the minds of Russian writers with the end of the militant Communism era in Russia. The new economic policy was responsible for a general shift to moderate conceptions in the literature as well as the life of Russia. Thus, from 1922 to 1929, rich American uncles, enterprising American detectives and gold prospectors, and wild Texas cowboys reigned in Soviet literature whenever America was chosen as the subject. But the Red moral was affixed, sometimes very skilfully, to every story and scene laid in America or with the help of American figures.

Michael Zoshchenko described the daydream of a petty Soviet clerk, Zabezhkin. The clerk imagined an old man fainting on the street before his eyes. Clerk Zabezhkin rushed to his aid and took him in a cab to his house. The old man proved to be "an American subject" who wished to reward Zabezhkin for his kindness. "Here, Zabezhkin," he said, "is a trillion roubles for you." The author made it clear that this daydreamer was a petty, stupid individual, a relic of the past, unawakened by the Revolution.

Yessenin, in his poem-play *The Country of Scoundrels* (1922-1923), told of picturesque Klondike prospectors, but the center of the tale was occupied by an episode of lurid fraud practised by some of the prospectors and promoters on New York investors. One of these promoters, Mister Jim, was represented as hiring a group of miners who, given pieces of gold, were told to shoot them from their rifles and Brownings into the hills and valleys of the Klondike. Gold appeared where none was before. The stock of Mister Jim's company soared and then fell—to the ruin of his gullible investors and to his own personal enrichment.

In 1929, Sayanov published in Leningrad his narrative poem *The Cardboard America*, in which Detective Jorty chased Professor Gramen, while Midshipman Smith brought to Banker Jeremiah Bulkins his plan for the diversion of the Gulf Stream to make North America warmer and richer. The detective was shown in the approved bang-bang manner of pre-revolutionary Russian dime-novels dealing with the Nat Pinkertons and the Nick Carters. Crafty Jorty began his great day by masquerading with a false moustache and a cardboard shoulder. He took his dog and his newspaper to a café where, while reading crime news, he loaded his trusty Winchester. Breath-taking adventures ensued, including lynchings and train-wrecks. Though the author himself, in his preface, warned that much of American life, as he interpreted it, was pure phantasy, he was careful and class-conscious enough to introduce into his poetic thriller one MacConney, a heroic Negro Communist agitator. The

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author also showed that useful inventions are being quite often shelved or suppressed by greedy American capitalists. Professor Gramen was threatened, for instance, by the agents of Banker Bulkins who frowned on Gramen's invention of a safety-brake because it threatened his own railroad-insurance business.

More realistic pictures of America were given by Soviet writers when relations between the two countries improved sufficiently to allow some of these writers to visit the fabulous America. Yessenin was the first of such travellers. Isadora Duncan, on her sojourn in Soviet Russia, met and married the young blue-eyed, hard-drinking poet and brought him to the country of her birth for a brief time. The year was 1922. Yessenin was amazed by the smooth automobile roads of America and called them in his poems "stony rivers of no dust", but he suspected the dollar power behind each motion of a wheel. To him, in America, even expresses and cars "counted a dollar a second" as they whirled along the roads "in the foam of gasoline". He wrote that America was the place where the world's rascals gathered and the world's chains were forged. He complained that America was no place for a poet: "If you want to neigh your soul out they'll say that you are either drunk or stupid".

A much more detailed visitor's appraisal of America was given by Mayakovsky both in prose and poetry. He, who in 1918 and 1919 wrote of grotesque skyscrapers and revolts in Chicago, came to the United States in 1925, through Mexico and Texas. Though he crossed a goodly part of the North American continent, though he saw cowboys and Indians and prairies, he wrote very little of them, concentrating his muse on great American cities—he, the poet of the ultra-urban future of the human race.

Mayakovsky visited New York, Chicago and Detroit, and wrote of them eloquently and endlessly, worshipping the grandeur of the American machine, and deploring the capitalistic use it has been put to. In New York, he loved Broadway with its blinking and blinding lights. He loved New York's huge terminals, "the proudest views in the world". But he vented his wrath upon Coney Island, "that vile, idiotic carnival". He described Americans as he saw them—slowing their task of chewing gum only to ask their friends: "Make money?" He said that even babies sucked milk as if their mothers' breasts were dollars. "Americans run around neither with beards nor expressions on their faces. . . . You work here a dollar's worth and you get a penny." He pictured the unemployed hurling themselves from Brooklyn Bridge into the Hudson River while Coolidge prosperity was at its height—which was quite an acrobatic feat considering that the East River, and not the Hudson, flows under that bridge. He noticed that money permeated even American folk-sayings. He quoted with malice and indignation: "You look like two cents. . . . You look like a million dollars". But he liked the Americans because they loved money not for itself but for the things they could get and do with its help.

He slapped an average American on the back because he was a spendthrift and not a miser. Yet, Mayakovsky could not stomach the smugness of these Babbitts. He wrote a poem about a skyscraper and the self-satisfied money-getters that worked, loved, and slept in it, exclaiming that all such smugness was —thank the Revolution!—wiped out of Russia seven years before. He complained bitterly: "I longed to come seven thousand versts farther, but I came seven years back".

The poet also found the lack of the glorified efficiency and speed in New York. There were many loafers even in America's busiest seasons. Mayakovsky amused himself by stopping on the streets, gazing at the sky, and watching, to his satisfaction, a crowd of idle and curious people gather around him and gaze as he did. He could not understand the lack of purpose and artistry in the Americans' lives. "Having created phono-

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graph and radio, they throw them aside, to the plebs, and themselves they hear Rachmaninoff. Often they fail to understand him, but they make him an honorary citizen of some city or other, and they present him, in a golden case, with a package of Sewer Company shares worth forty thousand dollars." It seemed to Mayakovsky that, at their parties, American ladies displayed their knees to men, thinking all the while how much this or that male was worth in dollars. He also noted dirty story telling, rough petting, poker playing, and looking at the recent acquisitions of the host in the line of ties and suspenders; he considered all these as typical pastimes of American hosts and guests. He further wrote that Americans worshipped titles, that they could run automobiles but could not fix them, and that generally they were not as much of a democratic race of mechanical geniuses as they were traditionally supposed to be. Neither did they live up to their reputation as healthy sportsmen. He said that their few specialists and performers in sports were healthy and husky, but the mob was sickly and puny.

Mayakovsky attributed a special sinister importance to the armories he saw at street corners. The armories were there to quell the future revolutions. But at the same time he failed to see any pronounced revolutionary spirit in the American masses. They were not daring. Why, they were not really American in the sense of restless pioneering always associated with America by European writers. He proudly pointed at his own turbulent self: "I, entirely lacking in any system, hating to bow before fate, even I, a poet, am more American than any typical American!"

He hoped that Negroes would rescue America from her doldrums for the glory of a revolution. He asserted: "Heated by Texas lynch bonfires, Negroes are sufficiently dry powder for the blasts of the Revolution". Mayakovsky was not alone among the Soviet writers to show an enthusiastic solicitude for the Negroes of America. We have already noted Sayanov's worship of his hero MacConney, the Negro Communist agitator, and we find in Shcheglov's *Nord-Ost* an effective scene of the snubbing of a Negro out of a white-folks' restaurant in New York. But Mayakovsky's solicitude for American Negroes stands out in Soviet literature as most colourful and enthusiastic. In his poem, *Some Say "Civilization", Others—"Colonial Expansion"*, he painted in gloomy but powerful shades the oppression of the poor black by the rich white. He presented an American Pork King haughtily walking "in the sunrise of diamonds" and communicating his syphilis to a Negro girl who had hair "dense as oil". Black Tom, the young girl's husband, came home from a long journey and was also afflicted with the Pork King's disease. There followed a complete deterioration of the entire Negro family.

The same poem had the pitiful story of another Negro, Willie the shoeblack, and a certain American in Havana who was known as the mightiest of Sugar Kings. Willie interceded the Sugar King one day on the street, saying: "I beg your pardon, Mr. Bregg. Why should a black Negro make white sugar for you? If you love coffee with sugar, won't you please make sugar yourself?" Mr. Bregg's white skin became yellow with rage. He hit Willie. He considered his gloves contaminated by their contact with Willie's black skin, and he threw them away, one after the other, as he distributed his punches. He marched away—while

the Negro
sniffed with his mangled nose,
raised his brush,
nursing his cheekbone.
How could he have known
that with such a question
he should have applied
to the Communist International,
in Moscow?

IV

The inauguration of the Five-Year Plan and its first successes wrought a certain

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change in the attitude of Soviet Russians toward America.

America remained, more than ever, a country to be emulated in her mechanical wonders and efficiency. The Russians still laughed wistfully over Zoshchenko's humorous comparison of the public baths in America and those in the Soviet Union. In an American bath-house, said the humorist, the underwear of a customer was laundered, ironed and mended and other miracles of speed and comfort were performed while he made his ablutions, but in a Soviet bath-house a customer could not even get his soap and overcoat back once he was through washing. Yet, America was more than ever to be looked down upon, and even pitied, for her backward social system and her lack of faith in the Russian experiment.

Yessenin returned to Russia in 1923 to say that after America the villages of Russia—those villages which he had so dearly loved—seemed so many pitiful lichens to him. He committed suicide two years later; he did not live to see the transformation of these lichen-villages into mechanized collective farms. But Mayakovsky shot himself to death early in 1930, after the Americanization of Russia had already begun. He lived to thunder joyously in his poem, *Americans Wonder*: "Reaching out on her tiptoe, batting no eyelash, America is looking through her shell-rimmed eyeglasses at the shores of USSR. She says: 'Why are those people of that rare race bustling there, far away, with their construction? At first they day-dreamt of a Five-Year Plan and now they are effecting it in four years. You can't approach such people with an American yardstick. Neither a dime nor a dollar tempts them. What people are these? What a mettle!'" And Mayakovsky answered America's wonder: "Misters! It is your age-old practice to buy with money a zest to build. Bloated misters, you won't understand the roots of the zeal of our Communards. Oh do wonder, you bourgeois, at our Communist shores. We will catch up with you and outstrip you, oh you quick-footed, famous America!"

The same idea of Russian-American competition is now, in 1931, expressed by Bezimensky in his poem, *A Tragedy Night*. There, an American engineer, Houston, competes with a Russian worker of Dnieprostroy, the Dnieper River dam construction job. The American wins individually because of his personal skill, but the Russians win when they act in a group. In Russian life there is much to be desired and improved, admits the Soviet poet, and he humorously pens the scene of the American's arrival in Dnieprostroy: "When he came, the funny man, whom we call Yakov and the Americans call Jack, he, sniffling and angry, barked at what we call a house and they call a lot of dirt, at what we call a gift and they call graft, and at what we call work and they call trash".

But, just the same, Russia is winning the race. Now, in 1931, when Boris Pilnyak, another Soviet Russian writer, is on a visit in America, it is not to wonder and envy and denounce as Yessenin and Mayakovsky did, but calmly to note and gauge the competitor and his waning power. Last March, Pilnyak said to his New York interviewers: "I came here because USSR and USA are at the present time the two most interesting countries in the world. Both of them are building their history now, this moment, while the building of Western Europe is a thing of the past, it is lost in the ages. Being a writer from the Soviet Union, the country who is building her history before our eyes, I came to look at the building principles of America. America is the climax of new Western culture". And a few weeks later, Pilnyak sternly wrote down the first results of his observations and comparisons: "In USA it is considered an honour to be distinguished by one's wealth, to be a millionaire. But in USSR to be distinguished by one's wealth is considered a shame. In USA, the dollar is the commander and the aim to be achieved. But in USSR to chase after the rouble is both shameful and

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senseless. The rouble in USSR is neither a stimulus nor an aim. A working man in USA must look for work, must fear losing his work. But in USSR work looks for man. There, work is not only man's right but his duty as well. To be unemployed in USSR is against law".

There is no doubt in the minds of the Soviet Russian writers that Russia will win the race. It may take a long, long time, but the victory will be hers, and America will have to follow Russia's example of Socialism. Indeed, some Russian writers picture the time of America's conversion as quite distant, perhaps a matter of centuries. A. Belayev, in his phantasy *Struggle in the Ether*, thus pictures the ultimate series of encounters between Red Europe and White-Guard America:

Revolutionary waves roll over all Europe and Asia. It is a terrible but a great era. American capitalists send their fleet to help their brothers-in-class, but the fleet is defeated by the united Red fleets of Russia, England, Germany and France. Americans are frightened. They hastily retreat, letting European events run their own course and hoping to make money on the economic ruin of their transatlantic neighbors. But these hopes are not fulfilled. The revolution triumphs in Europe and Asia, and life there is arranged scientifically, justly, and beautifully. Workers in America chaff and rise; they ask help from Europeans. But the American capitalists and their technicians have now a new and terrible weapon of war, Death Rays, which burn the United Red fleet on its way to America to cinders. The enemy remains invisible throughout the entire battle. A lone submarine escapes to bring the horrible tale. The Reds then send a fleet of racket-airships to punish the American capitalists from the sky, but the same Death Rays meet and destroy it, transforming the ships and their crews into a great cloud of vapour.

But the Red Europeans find the secret of Death Rays. Now both sides are equally invulnerable. Each prepares for the last desperate struggle, commissioning its technicians to invent new and stronger weapons and devices the better to vanquish the other side. Decades and centuries pass. The American capitalists grow weak-bodied, weak-stomached, unbelievably puny except for their enormous heads—for they become more and more learned and crafty. They keep their workers as virtual slaves, deep down in the basements of their great skyscrapers. These basements are their factories. Some of the workers sit and work legless, for the scientists in the employ of the capitalists manage to breed them in their laboratories legless, or devoid of any other organs, at will—so that the workers fit into the machinery as its part. These poor creatures never see sunlight; they are fed by an oiler marching from one to another of them with his oil-can just as he marches from one wheel to another.

Yet, some of the workers are allowed by the American capitalists, through sheer necessity, to remain normal, and now these rise in revolt, summoning the Europeans to their aid. The Europeans respond. There ensues a tremendous battle on the American land, sea and air, a battle of machinery, rays, and chemicals. The governing clique of capitalist America is chased to its last refuge on the bottom of the ocean near the South Pole. But this great submarine-airship-city is finally discovered by the Red engineers of Europe, and the American capitalists perish—the last capitalists of the world. Socialism and justice, equality and beauty now rule in America as they have for centuries ruled in Europe!

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FOUR POEMS

not yet released (or even dreamed of)
by any branch of the family of

Emily Dickinson

Eternity's as long as time
  And half of time again;
But God can take eternity
  And put it in his pipe.

The stars supply the matches,
  And when there comes a cloud,
The little Cherubims laugh loud
  And kick their heels,—or would.

* * *

If you have found an inward lake
  Lit by a hidden sun,
There to withdraw and there to partake
  Auto-communion,

To drink the wine of wisdom
  And eat the bread of grief,
God, who has numbered all your hairs,
  Will share in your belief.

* * *

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Leap up, my soul, and caper,
  Trample on dead delight;
Thought is a very super-
  erogatory might.

Tissue of leaves enshrouds in pink
  The white-oak limbs, and all
The valley gods are startled
  When April makes her bow.

* * *

The first part is the hardest;
  You take a sudden breath
And say, when this is over
  I shall shake hands with death.

The middle part is longest;
  You whirl around and round
Seeing your life in flashes,
  Like swimmers being drowned.

The last part is the quickest;
  Something like a knife
Cuts you, and you are dead, and wake
  Knowing that this is life.

Edward Peale

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IS IT WISE TO MEET AUTHORS?

by Osbert Burdett

Only people who have never tried will doubt that this is an open question. Those readers who have not tried will answer with a romantic shout of Yes. Famous authors, who are always being pestered, will say an unhesitating No. An author who has made the experiment will reply in the light of his own experiences.

Why do readers want to? And what do they expect?

Human curiosity explains a good deal. For example, authors' clubs and authors' dinners are crowded by people who are not authors, by people who would like to be authors, by others who would like to meet them, and that is why the guest of honour is often almost the only author in the room. He, poor fellow, probably has to make a speech, and since authors are no more likely than anyone else to be good speakers, the prospect often spoils the dinner, because it is disagreeable to be a guest and yet to have to earn your meal. The guest of honour knows that if he has any admirers present, they will have come in a state of derangement, for the effect of a book upon the human imagination of a stranger is to conjure up a fancy-picture of the writer and to create the illusion that the reader understands the writer because the writer has succeeded in interesting him. In the mood of excitement created by a moving piece of writing, it is impossible for unsophisticated people to draw any distinction between the imagination of the author and his common humanity. They expect him to be of imagination all compact, and can only realize with an effort that the buttons come off his trousers as if he had never written anything at all. The first question to tackle, then, is what people expect when they are anxious to meet an author?

They do not know themselves, and consequently if the meeting is unexpected, they will have an extraordinary shock. Years ago I was walking unconcernedly to Oxford Circus when a black cloak waving in the wind attracted my eye. Catching a glimpse of the wearer's face, I recognized (from his portraits) Mr. W. B. Yeats. I remember standing rooted to the spot as if a miracle had happened, unable to stir for several minutes after he had been lost in the crowd. As this sight of him was wholly unexpected, my reflexes had full play. I behaved as it was my instinct to behave at that moment. It seemed to me extraordinary that a poet should be in Oxford Circus, that he should cross the street like other men, that he should be doing what everyone else was doing, and belong to the real world of everyday. Before this reduction of my imagination to reality, the fact that none seemed to recognize him was of little moment. I found that I could not easily accommodate the experiences that his work had given to my imagination with the ordinary circumstances of life; that the man had been lost in the poet for me, and that I had

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never imagined the poet himself at all, or conceived him in the likeness and in the common surroundings of a human being. The world that his imagination had created was the world to which I had supposed to him to be limited, and yet, had anyone told me this a few moments earlier, I should certainly have refused to believe him. No other meeting with an author has provided a similar thrill, and therefore I conclude that the wisest way to meet an author is to recognize him, at a distance, in the street.

The next best way is much harder to manage, for it too depends upon a benign chance. To meet someone in a room, to be inaudibly introduced, to have a few words with him, to hear him talk for a short time, to turn to someone else, to see him leave, and, after he has left, to learn that he is your literary idol: that, indeed, is a most excellent way. Your ignorance of his identity has removed any trace of self-consciousness; his appeal to you (or his want of appeal) is entirely the effect that he naturally produces. Your opinion of him is entirely uncorrupted by his reputation and by your own feelings, and you have the luxury of a regret at not having realized who he was. With these two ways of meeting authors there cannot be the slightest quarrel. In each you have learned something wholly unprejudiced about him and about yourself; but when the meeting is conscious and deliberate we are in an altogether less pure atmosphere.

To make the distinction clear we must use our words carefully. By Author I shall be meaning the person by whose work or whose reputation you have been affected; and by Man I shall mean his visible presence in his clothes. From what has gone before it will be clear that we set out to meet a Reputation that we have created largely for ourselves, and the oddness of our experience is that we shall be seeing not the reputation but the Man. The reason why people behave absurdly when they meet an Author is that they are addressing themselves not to a human being but to the imagination behind the pages of a book. The attitude of receptivity before a volume, when the body is at rest and the mind is alert, is turned upside down when his presence is before us. Our body is not at rest when we are self-conscious, and our mind is not alert but ridiculously confused. In this confusion you will probably begin by making some allusion to his writings, to your feelings about them, to your interest in his work, and you will be puzzled that he does not like it. On his side, you see, he prefers to meet his readers through the pages of his books, but when he is in the flesh before them he wishes them, in their turn, to be not Readers but real people. There is nothing that an author dislikes more than to have his work dragged into ordinary discussion. The man wishes to meet other men. He does not want to be conscious of any readers in his private life. To get on with him you should forget that he is an author, and his first desire will be to assume that you will forget all about his books. In this way human confidence can be established between you and, once that has been established, the fellow may become egoistic after all—one never knows. The art of approach is the secret of human intercourse, and in England people always meet over a meal in order that discussion shall be smoothed by the sacred pleasures of the table, preferably over dinner so that we need not hurry over the wine. Thomas Walker, the classic author of the English *Art of Dining*, perfectly understood what the ritual should be, and the bliss of postprandial calm has been well compared to the bliss that passes understanding. Food and wine are the cradles of conversation, and, once dinner is over, the Author in congenial company may, with no or little urging, descend into the presence of the Man.

Now, suppose that your experience has come so far as this: that you can meet a celebrity without causing or feeling any sense of discomfort, that you will never introduce the basis of his renown, is it worth while to

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meet him? Here, again, experience gives an answer which can neither take the immediate form of Yes or No. The reply depends upon a variety of things that the thoughtless curious omit to consider.

Since a fool is a person who learns nothing from experience, we need not waste our time upon the snob. Most people have that which everyone condemns, a streak of snobbery; but we must indulge in no abuse of something which is only the vulgar form of a noble worship of distinction. In England, where titles happily exist, the difference is easily made clear. If there is a charming person in a room who is plain Mrs. Smith and a vulgar person in the room, Lady Smithson, a person who prefers the company of the latter to the company of the former is a snob. But though he, or she—in all countries the worst snobs are women—may mistake where the true distinction lies, may prefer the title to the fact, it is still fine in them to admire distinction however crudely. To pretend that distinction should not be admired, that it is wrong to desire distinguished surroundings and distinguished people, is to blaspheme the Holy Ghost. Blake's definition of worship should never be forgotten: "Honouring His gifts in other men, each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best; those who envy or calumniate great men hate God". Do not therefore denounce the snob too eagerly. It is always better to love good than to hate evil; and because Puritans spend so much time hating they are poison. On the whole, titles encourage their bearers to live up to them, and, as another poet has said, "inequality is the source of all delight". It is to experience this delight that people are tempted to meet famous authors.

The present writer is forced to draw the following conclusion from his own experience, not a large experience but enough to be decisive for himself. Only one famous author has surpassed his expectations, and the reason why he did shall be presently explained. The remainder were either neutral or in various degrees personally disappointing, but disappointing (please remember) only when compared with their reputations, not necessarily disappointing in the least considered apart from their books. The object of this confession is not the impertinence of pretending to place a set of living human beings in any scale, but to arrive at a point that may throw some light upon the activity of authorship itself.

A good author is one who puts the best of himself into his work, a specialist in the art of communicating his imagination to his readers by means of the written word. Never forget that an author is not necessarily one who sees further or probes deeper than his fellows. He may not do this and may yet have deserved and have won an international reputation. His gift is to have words for every thought in his mind, for every emotion in his range, for every experience in his memory. There is only one thing that he must never be: never tongue-tied, never at a loss for the apt word, never unable to convey by a phrase the matter that occupies him. Clearly a person of narrow experience, of relatively small imagination, if he had the art of using *all* the materials at his command, would still have vast resources and might be a literary genius. Herrick in his exquisite poetry, Sir Thomas Browne in his majestic prose, were men with a superlative gift for expression in words, but Herrick had no "ideas", and the great Sir Thomas not many. All matter imperfectly expressed is waste-matter in literature. The bare power to describe visible things is ample for an immortal reputation. When Shelley finds the words "slow and soft" for a toad, he is at his greatest. The evocative power over language is the writer's all in all.

This being so, and the gift of writing, when pared down to its root, a highly special gift, and one that must absorb its possessor, it is clear that, outside its exercise, he need not be remarkable in any way. He may be a

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child in affairs; he may be bad at conversation; he may have no interest outside his special work; he may seem a dull fellow to meet. In these days at any rate, when (for a whole variety of reasons) men are cast in a smaller mould and are far more cramped in their development than they were in Shakespeare's time, I fancy that a good author, in the sense defined, is more a specialist than ever. I should be inclined to say that, in our time, the better a writer is the less likely he is to be impressive personally, though his intimate friends no doubt will have glimpses beyond the reach of casual acquaintances altogether. For this reason, then, one suggests that the best of living authors—those, whoever they may prove to be, in whom posterity will take any interest—are likely to be the least amusing to meet casually in the flesh.

The bad author (by this absolute standard), on the other hand, is one who has a much smaller command of words, who rarely finds the perfectly evocative phrase for his thought or observation, who has, in a word, proved unable to put all of himself into his work. Being less of a specialist he will probably be more various, and is likely therefore to be more amusing to meet. Balzac, who wrote for eighteen hours a day, Flaubert, who tormented himself to death in his search for finality of expression, were not, I believe, very attractive to casual acquaintances. Pater, we know, looked like a shop-walker, dressed like a churchwarden, scandalized his more romantic admirers by the ugliness of his moustache and wore a mask in private life. At the moment, it is true, it is less the fashion to admire him; nevertheless, when fashion has passed over him a hundred times, his writing will endure. Had he been alive now, I should not advise you to make his acquaintance, and should ask you to infer from this advice that he was a true author. This illustration will serve to emphasize the argument: that the best authors should be neither seen nor heard.

With the second-best one can be more encouraging.

The third-rate are like everybody else, except that the discriminating will not read them.

When, therefore, now and again—for a quiet life, a dislike of crowds, a hatred of crushes, a horror of promiscuous chatter, an instinctive refusal to hurry about, keeps me happily out of the racket—I run across some comrades of the craft, my silent meditations in the corner of a room, for only in such corners can one talk to one person at a time, sometimes take the form of the question: Is he more interesting than his writings or are his writings more interesting than he? If the former seems true, he is an incomplete author. If the latter makes one prefer his pen to his presence, then the theory suggests that he is an author all right. If I followed this up by impertinent examples, the crime would be of no use; for you, reader, would not believe that the theory had not dictated them. Nevertheless, the notion sprang from the experiences. It forced itself upon me after several years, and so far I have found nothing serious to contradict it.

You can make the experiment in your own home yourself.

If you apply the test to dead writers, as you readily can by reading in various memoirs how they struck their contemporaries, you can form your own opinion of its value. To take such examples as happen to recur to my mind at this moment, Elizabeth Barrett was liked by almost everybody whom she met, but opinions were sometimes violently opposed as to her husband, Robert Browning. Yet we know that they were wrong in calling him "the husband of the poet", and that, for all the beauty of her love-sonnets, she was infinitely his inferior in poetry. Blake seemed to impress only those who became his disciples. Crabb Robinson, we know from his diary, dropped Blake after half a dozen meetings, if so many. Christina Rossetti, a classic poet, was deliberately reserved and

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aloof in company. She horrified the admiring Gosse by the calculated plainness of her clothes. Tennyson, except when he was reading his own verses, often made the worst impression socially. Landor could be so impossible that only a writer of equal greatness, Browning himself, was invariably happy with him. Shelley, it is true, proved generally irresistible. Byron delighted to create anger or dismay. Dr. Johnson was alarming, but his best came out in his talk. This is a game—but limit it to the post-Shakespeareans—that you can play for yourself, and Shelley will suggest other exceptions. Verlaine made the largest demands upon his visitors, and possibly would never have been allowed to enter America at all. Even when he visited Oxford, his host had many anxious hours, and Sir William Rothenstein has lately revealed how difficult it was to persuade Verlaine to depart before he had committed some indiscretion. Wilde was admittedly more impressive than his books, and his reputation is bound up with too many other things to be identified with the quality of his writings. One should certainly have met him. Your own Poe, whom we unite in admiring, was not conspicuous for social graces, though bad luck and not his manners, until he became a drunkard, were to blame. These instances are taken at random. There is no "almost" in their selection, and it is for you to decide whether or no they bear me out. In Edmund Gosse's long gallery of portraits there is ample material for the test, and, to prolong it no further, Coventry Patmore was not often very likable in company, while the explosive Carlyle had always friends.

Sometimes the difference of effect produced by a man and his work is extreme. Thomas Hardy, whose last two novels created a violent controversy, was so inconspicuous and gentle that he is one of the oddest examples of all. A person who has not read *The Dynasts* has missed the most original of modern epics—perhaps the only truly modern one—but there seems to be universal agreement that none need regret not having met the man. He would therefore be a perfect example of the notion that the more wonderful the author the less wonderful the man—except, one may believe, in the recesses of his private circle. Before I end with the example that I promised further back, there is another caution to be added.

A certain type of author, not numerous but easily recognized, will cultivate a style of intimacy in his writings that may seem to be the very mirror of personal intercourse. Such a man will buttonhole his readers, will charm them by confidences, will engage them by little confessions, will seem to be whispering into your very ear. When such a style as this has been made into a perfectly responsive instrument, the reader (under its spell) cannot help feeling that he has actually been admitted into the presence. The aim of the style is to produce that precise effect, but the reader who would follow this by a personal meeting would be very rash indeed to build any hopes upon it. The effect is, of course, purely artistic, and the man may be disconcerting to an alarming degree.

If Mr. George Moore came to America, his admirers, I am sure, would feel a peculiar desire to meet him. They could not help saying to themselves: "Why, we are old friends already. He has confided a hundred private details into our delighted ears. We have chuckled over his private jokes with him. We have never wearied of his reminiscences. We are familiar with the stable-companions of his youth. We have followed his adventures in London. We know all about his nights in Paris at the Nouvelles Athènes, all about his clock and his carpet in Ebury street. What can he have left out of his record that shall be less a fulfilment than a surprise?"

That is the effect that Mr. Moore has produced on the large "family" (as he calls them) of his readers. It is a tribute to his art that it should be so, because they cannot realize one calculated omission. Reflection

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alone will tell us that Mr. Moore has deliberately left out the whole of his non-literary self. All that was not art in his composition he has spared no pains to prune. This can be shown by comparing his own word-portrait of himself with the paintings that his distinguished friends have made of him. Does the author of *Avowals*, of *A Story-Teller's Holiday*, of *Conversations in Ebury Street* in the least resemble the man in the portraits by Manet and the rest? True, the face on the canvas may well be that of the writer of a young man's *Confessions*, of *Memoirs of my Dead Life*, of *Modern Painting*, but is there any portrait that accords with the author of the last of his three styles, that last conversational melody to which *The Lake* was the transition? There is not. One of the most delightful of Mr. Moore's literary inventions is the soliloquist of his latest books, the "Moore" who appears to talk, in his own person, to Gosse, to Mr. John Balderston, to Mr. Geraint Goodwin, to Mr. Walter de la Mare and to the others. Just as some of these gentlemen have smilingly repudiated any responsibility for their part in these literary conversations, so the Man here may repudiate the Author and the Author differ from the Man. The perfection of the illusion thus created is sufficient reason for cherishing it; but it would be rash to assume that the figure so vivid in the pages would be identical with the gentleman seated in his chair. His friends have sometimes quarrelled with his writings. His literary admirers might discover a different stimulus in the man. Those who have had experience of both would part with neither. He has proved that autobiography can have an artistic convention of its own.

There is another kind of autobiography in which the Author and the Man may well be one. I should be surprised to find that Mr. W. H. Davies did not resemble the Super-Tramp or that he differed from the hero of its sequel, *Last Days*. To take a recent example, Sir William Rothenstein, one dares assume to be very like the central but unobtrusive figure in *Men and Memories*. Simplicity, like murder, will out, and such simplicity would beggar invention. Though these last two autobiographies may seem artless, and to owe their charm to being so, the art is there even if it flower more by instinct than by cultivation. There is nothing professional or sophisticated in the poetry of Mr. Davies, nothing professional in the prose of William Rothenstein. The perfect prose of Hawthorne was not a cultivated prose. Though he wrote privately for practice, especially upon tiny things, he was born with a fastidious ear and needed no professional training. He wrote well from the first. People who have left their reminiscences of Hawthorne agree that the Man was very like the Author of his books. If you like his works, you would have done wisely to have met Hawthorne, but the unprofessional genius—the inspired amateur for whom words fall into their proper places less by cunning than by grace—is a beautiful exception, the most beautiful of all. Pepys's character was less admirable than his honesty. You might not have liked Pepys the man. The Diarist was great.

The opposite extreme of professional competence, wherein grace is slender and expertness mechanical, can be seen in such a writer as Bernard Shaw. You can hear with grating distinctness the click of the typewriter in his style. As he never wearies of reminding us, he is a journalist first and last. Years ago someone showed me a letter in which he wrote: "I cannot write beautiful things". His books produce a difference of opinion. They have never been liked by poets. Yet there is a surprising degree of unanimity among the people who have met him. These declare that the Author is infinitely less attractive than the Man. So far does the contrast go that they will say that his writings reflect scarcely anything of that which they have felt in his company. They may qualify this by remarking that he is the same to everyone; that this gleaming and distin-

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guished charity is like the sun, shining impersonally on all but attached to nobody. He has certainly not succeeded in putting the whole of himself into his work. What could be less inviting, less distinguished, less genial or less humane than the clutter and racket of the cadences that give us the sensation while we read them of the rattle of a train through a tunnel: "the miracle of condensed recapitulation", "the tyranny of domestic solicitude", "metabiological pentateuch" and the like? The current verdict is that one does wisely to meet him, and the current verdict is just. The corollary is that his writings will, like Wordsworth's Lucy, cease to be.

If a remarkable man is not therefore expected to be an author, why should a remarkable author be expected to be remarkable in private life; or do we rather hope to be thought remarkable ourselves if we have met him, for such meetings are rarely self-concealed? You may say if you are sufficiently candid: "If any celebrity is within my reach, I like to say that I have met him". Very well; but if that is your object you will gain nothing more when you have done so. We receive what we bring to others, and to enter self-absorbed into a company is to leave it no wiser than before. Much has been written, truly enough, of the vanity of authors, but the vanity of their readers and admirers is equally common. The vanity of authors is conspicuous only in so far as they are conspicuous themselves.

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O. HENRY AND THE SILVER DOLLAR

by George Seibel

This is an O. Henry story—not one he wrote, but one in which he was the hero. The other characters are a book reviewer, several assorted newspaper men and a few supernumeraries. The scene is Pittsburgh, with glimpses of New York. The only property used, and that soon disappears, is a round silver dollar. Those coins had not then all rolled to the western coast or been segregated in Mr. Mellon's safe at the Treasury Department. In fact, O. Henry wrote one story, *The Enchanted Profile*, about such a coin. This is another story.

Reviewing books and doing other odd jobs for the Pittsburgh *Gazette*, back about 1903, I remember when the first O. Henry stories were beginning to appear in *Ainslee's* and the *World*. Soon some of them were being syndicated in the Sunday supplements. Then a volume was collected and printed by the McClure Company under the title of *The Four Million*. On reviewing that book I heard the prologue of the story I am about to tell.

One of my associates, Bob Jones, told the tale. "I was on the *Dispatch* with Fred Splitstone," he said, "when a stranger drifted into the office. He was somewhat shabbily dressed and seemed a bit shy. He produced an envelope of manuscripts from an inner pocket of his baggy coat, and intimated that he wished to sell them to the Sunday Editor. Splitstone was fulfilling that important function. At the stranger's request he read the stories then and there. They put him into a quandary, and he came to my desk to ask what he should do. I glanced hurriedly through the stories, and also was in a quandary. Together we gave the stranger our verdict and advice.

" 'These are good stories,' we told him, 'too damn good for you to sell to us. We couldn't pay enough for material of this sort—you ought to sell it to a syndicate, or a magazine, and get a better price. It's hot stuff and you ought to have no trouble selling it. But this is just one inland paper, and we've a space rate that wouldn't make you fat. If we paid more the business office would throw a fit.'

" 'That's very nice, boys,' said the stranger, 'but I need some coin right now. I'm on my way to New York, to see if I can sell any of these stories. I'm sure I can, but I've got to get there. I could telegraph to some friends in Ohio, if I had a dollar for the Western Union. Just now I'm dead broke. If you buy one of those stories, I'd feel like old Crœsus. If I don't sell a story, I'll have to borrow a dollar of somebody, and I don't know anybody that rich.'

" 'You can borrow a dollar right here,' said Splitstone, who was a generous guy, and he produced a silver cartwheel and spun it on his desk. The stranger extended his hand, and the dollar went into his pocket.

" 'Thank you very much, boys,' he said, 'you'll get this dollar back as soon as I land somewhere and sell some of these stories.' "

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That was the last they saw of the stranger, Bob Jones told me. It was likewise the last Splitstone saw of his dollar. But in the course of six months one of the stories brought into the *Dispatch* office had appeared in *Ainslee's* or the *Smart Set* under the name of O. Henry. Within a month or two the other story also appeared in print. A little later O. Henry stories began to be featured every week in the New York *World*; they got into *McClure's* and other magazines. O. Henry became a literary craze. But Splitstone never got his dollar back.

After hearing this tale I decided it was worth printing. O. Henry had already become a famous figure. Critics were calling him the American Maupassant, as they were calling Maeterlinck the Belgian Shakespeare —because they were so different. Here was a bit of scandal to add to the O. Henry legend in process of growth. So I printed the story in the Pittsburgh *Gazette*, and rubbed my hands in ghoulish glee, as if I had got a scoop on the suicide of Tom Chatterton or Bob Browning's elopement.

Nothing happened for a long while.

Then one day, as I was seated at my desk, a blue-eyed and pleasant stranger drifted into the office. He walked softly—he spoke softly.

"Good morning," said he.

"Good morning," said I.

He presented a card from Harry Peyton Steger. Steger was publicity manager of the McClure Company, having succeeded Isaac F. Marcosson, Samuel Hopkins Adams, Witter Bynner, Vivian Burnett, and a procession of other notables.

Taking the card, I read a brief note upon its reverse: "This introduces Sydney Porter—O. Henry, you know". It was signed by Peyton Steger.

Of course I was glad to meet O. Henry. To use an orthodox metaphor, we fell upon each other's necks, though it was hot and sticky July weather, and the end of July in 1906 was doing its best to wilt the pumpkins.

After the ritual of getting acquainted had been complied with, we proceeded to see the sights of Pittsburgh: we travelled through the newly completed Mt. Washington Tunnel, which he said was "the finest place he had struck between El Paso and Hell"; we had high luncheon at the Seibel *Rittergut* on the southern hilltops; and we attended the auction of a dilapidated schoolhouse in Mt. Oliver, one of the suburbs, where I had become a member of the Board of Education by carefully concealing all symptoms of highbrowishness from the electorate.

The auction of that schoolhouse was a thrilling episode. The Borough had recently annexed part of an adjoining township. A small school building lay in the newly acquired territory, but as the children were now attending the big brick school this frame structure had to be disposed of some way. The School Board's legal department decided it must be done by public auction. Local real estate vultures saw their chance to snap up a bargain, and the School Board doubted whether the property would bring an adequate price. The auction had been fixed for the afternoon when O. Henry ate a delectable ham omelet at our villa, sat on our porch, admired our garden, and flirted with our little daughter. It was a day made for leafy luxury and languid laziness. But politics and finance intruded their ugly heads. I had to attend the auction of that schoolhouse, and told O. Henry of the sad circumstances.

"Well," said he, "you just take me along. I've had a bit of experience in a land office. I'll be an Eastern capitalist looking for investments, and maybe I can get you a better price by bidding up the property. I always felt I'd like to impersonate a plutocrat, and here's my chance at last."

We went to the auction, which was pulled off under the glaring sky, near the gate of a large cow pasture. I introduced O. Henry to the hovering real estate vultures as Mr. Porter, a gentleman from the East, connected with various great financial institutions, who might be interested in our real estate. At

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once he became an object of suspicious aversion. The real estate vultures put their heads together, and decided that they were not going to let any outsider get away with the property at some ridiculous figure. His quiet air of mild detachment was interpreted as the mask of a cunning capitalist, eager for his prey. But he'd have to pay for the property what it was worth.

After the dramatic auction in the cow pasture, O. Henry and I retired from the scene and proceeded to see the remaining sights of Pittsburgh. I found he was not unfamiliar with the city, especially with the downtown region, which justified his description of "the lowdownest place on earth". He had done some writing here; his wife's parents had the management of the Iron Front Hotel, a vanished landmark of the lower wards toward the unaesthetic Point. He was, on the occasion of this visit, staying at the St. Charles, another ancient hotel, also now a memory.

His daughter Margaret was at a school somewhere near Pittsburgh, and he was expecting to meet her. Other things pressed upon him to hasten his departure.

"I've got to write a story tonight," he said, ruefully surveying a letter. "Here's an editor who insists on getting some copy. I daren't go back to New York without that story."

He mopped his brow as he was lolling in a chair in the hotel entrance, almost on the sidewalk of Third Avenue. As I turned to leave him, he called me back.

"Tell me," said he. "You printed a story about me some time ago, how I borrowed a dollar from a Pittsburgh newspaper man?"

"Yes," said I.

"Can you give me his name and address?" he asked. "I always wanted to return that dollar, and I surely will."

Intimating that Fred was probably in sad need of that dollar, and had been depending on its return all these years, I gave him the name and address of Fred Splitstone.

O. Henry tucked the card carefully into his pocket, then we shook hands and parted.

After that we corresponded from time to time about various things. He always addressed me as Colonel Seibel, the only title ever conferred on me by any human being or institution. He made as many Colonels as the War Department ever did, and I was one of them. In a tentative way we even discussed collaboration in a comedy, and he read the manuscript of one I had written. A letter dated December 11, 1906, runs as follows:

My dear Colonel Seibel:

It's mighty funny, but the night before I got your letter I took a notion to look over *The Last Edition* once more before going to press. I got it out of my trunk, and spent an hour or two re-reading parts of it.

I think you've got a mighty neat comedy there, and you ought to get some of the managers to reading it. I don't see how I could improve it any—not that I am afflicted with modesty, but because it's in a different vein and style from my rougher efforts. Why don't you run over to N. Y. with the other Pittsburgh millionaires and spend a few days? All the theatres are hard up now for plays, and now is the opportunity.

Of course I've had the play bee in my bonnet, too, but I can't afford to listen to it buzz, because I've got enough work engaged in the fiction line to keep me busy until (estimated) the year 2011.

Yes, sir, I sure wish I had bought (on time) that school property on Mt. Oliver. By this time I might have become a decent citizen, and been on the school board, and had a crop of chickens and potato vines running all over the lawn.

Present my regards to Mrs. Seibel and *das kleine Mädchen*. Don't fail to hunt me up if you come over.

Yours very truly,

SYDNEY PORTER.

Drop me a line about the play ms. If you want to submit it to any manager here, I will send it as you direct. Or if you'd rather have it over there, I'll express it to you at once.

O. Henry might have made a story out of the travels and adventures of that play manuscript. The most favourable opinion voiced by

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any of the avid and anxious managers, hard up for new plays, was that it "wasn't tony enough for a Broadway audience". O. Henry afterward was stung by the "play bee", and a musical comedy written with Franklin P. Adams caused him the customary perturbation and deflation that accompany dramatic authorship.

Each of us occasionally heard from the other, though neither ever saw the other again. Our roads of destiny did not cross. But in 1909 I received a note from Peyton Steger, saying briefly:

Be sure to read interview with O. Henry in New York *Times* this Sunday. He says you are the editor alluded to in his reference to Pittsburgh.

There was a page in the New York *Times* in which O. Henry told an interviewer the story of his life. The Pittsburgh episode was described as follows:

Then there is that infernal newspaper over in Pittsburgh that printed the story that when I first began to write I blew into its office, looking like a tramp, offered manuscripts for sale, and before blowing out again borrowed a dollar. That story is an embroidered fib. Why, I was the best-dressed man in the office unless it was the editor, whose shoes were a little more pointed than mine.

It was a year after the story was printed before I saw it. Then I made a special trip over to Pittsburgh. I sent in my card to the editor.

"Sir," said I, when I at last found myself face to face with this libeller of my solvency; "Sir, I have come over to lick you."

"But wasn't it a bully good story?" asked the editor.

I admitted that it was, and instead of licking him we went out and lunched together.

After having read this ingenuous alibi, I penned an indignant note to O. Henry, charging him with base ingratitude, high treason, falsification of history, lese-majesty, and other heinous crimes.

"How can you speak of the Pittsburgh *Thunderer* as as infernal newspaper?" I demanded. "Why didn't you admit that the real reason you did not lick me is that I am six feet three in my stocking feet, and had a brace of six-shooters conspicuous on my desk? Your ingratitude is particularly base in view of the fact that we did not insist on the return of that dollar. Indeed, we in Pittsburgh are not only affluent but munificent. In spite of the unkind things you said, I want to assure you that you can come and get another dollar any time you need it. If you had bought that schoolhouse property, perhaps you wouldn't need it. You could be raising squabs or mushrooms, or taking in summer boarders, instead of libelling newspapers that print the truth about you."

This expostulation went to O. Henry, and in a few days I received his abject apology, as follows, dated April 9, 1909:

My dear Colonel Seibel:

Don't you never believe no such truck as that which you seen in the N. Y. *Times*.

High in my estimation stand yourself and the good old *Gazette*. I would rather cut off the letters on the right hand of the keyboard of my typewriter than speak of the Pittsburgh *Thunderer* as "an infernal newspaper". I never said it. And as for the rest, it was said lightly and personally and "jokecosely" and ananiasly —as you, of course, understand—and it sounds so different in cold print that I am moved to write and say so. Both Mr. Steger and I vied with each other in heaping encomiums upon your personal head.

I remember very well the cold tunnel that we traversed, and the thrilling auction of the schoolhouse that we attended. Since then I have often wondered concerning the fate of that memorable piece of property.

If I happen to visit Pittsburgh again, I hope you'll let me call. I shall bring Jack Johnson with me, as I had no idea you had attained "6 foot 3" since I saw you.

And that new dollar loan proposition hits me fine. I've got it over your signature, and if I can't discount it at any of the banks here, I'll come over and make you make good. For I need the dollar.

If you ever happen over this way—as Pitts-

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burgh Messinasses (is that spelled right?) often do, don't forget to drop in and lick me a time or two. We haven't any tunnels here, but I can find a funnel if you can be persuaded to use it.

With continuous regard, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

SYDNEY PORTER.

That letter was O. Henry himself, his blue eyes laughing, his taciturn lips parted for a pun, his hands raised with a deprecating gesture, a little tincture of cynicism on his tongue. Over in Germany, at the University of Giessen, I met a student who was writing his doctor's thesis about O. Henry. Imagine that elusive and equivocal saunterer being put into rubrics and categories. It's as amusing as the Texan proposition to turn the Travis County Jail into an O. Henry Memorial Library. He was always looking at life and laughing. There was always something of the eternal bad boy about him—ever the attitude of the comical truant caught with a fishing-rod. Such a culprit can always count on plenary absolution. He got it, and the incident of the dollar was closed.

And I never saw him again, for his health was breaking, and his life was over within fourteen months. He died with a pleasant jest on his lips: "I don't want to go home in the dark". And Peyton Steger too passed out of the land of the living, before he could write the life of O. Henry he was planning. Bob Jones is somewhere in a newspaper office in darkest Philadelphia, and Fred Splitstone is promoting the Book of the Month. But one thing is certain—and that is what makes this a typical O. Henry story—Splitstone never got his dollar back.

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FAMOUS REJECTIONS

by John Bakeless

One nemesis—and only one—sits at the elbow of that lordly autocrat, the magazine editor, and that no less potent magnifico, the publisher of books. It dogs the dreams and haunts the days even of their lowly servant, the first reader. Indeed, it is never quite absent from the thoughts of everyone who has in the least degree responsibility for the acceptance or the rejection of manuscript. It is the fear of rejecting, in a careless moment or a blind one, a masterpiece—or worse yet, a best-seller.

In the long history of editorial blunders there have even been instances in which doubly unlucky publishers' readers filled the cup of their offending to the very brim by rejecting manuscripts which were both masterpieces *and* best-sellers.

Most of the great publishing houses have the dark memory of some such blunder to haunt them—one of the things never mentioned in hearing of the head of the firm, but whispered about, sometimes, among the junior members of the staff, over the luncheon table. Walter Hines Page, the editorial genius who made a success of every magazine he touched, was guilty of one of the worst and (to his publisher) most expensive blunders of his day. George Meredith prevented publication of Thomas Hardy's first novel, although—genius that he was—he recognized the Hardy genius even then. So long is the list of the rejected great that it is almost an honour for the beginning scribbler to join—as he inevitably does—their number. Thackeray, Edward Fitzgerald, Kipling, Stevenson, W. D. Howells are only a few on the long list.

After losing his fortune in his early twenties, Thackeray had contrived to support himself and a growing family wholly on the proceeds of his writing. But in spite of his brilliance, he had a pretty constant struggle with editors and publishers throughout his free-lancing days—struggles of which he has left a more or less autobiographical account in *Pendennis*—until his growing fame made him a "name" worth buying.

There is some uncertainty just how many times *Vanity Fair* really was rejected before it finally crawled, obscurely, into print; though on the fact of its rejection all accounts agree. Thackeray's daughter, Lady Ritchie, alludes to "the journeys which the manuscript made to various publishers' houses before it could find one ready to undertake the venture", and remarks "how long its appearance was delayed by various doubts and hesitations". But she is not specific as to the identity of the offending publishers. Anthony Trollope contents himself with a general malediction on "the monthly nurses of periodical literature", who did not see a serial in the novel.

Thanks to this vagueness, Henry Colburn, of the *New Monthly Magazine* is the only editor who can be definitely hoisted to the

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bad eminence of the rejection. Thackeray himself seems to have realized from the first the greatness of his own conception. "I think", he wrote when he was only beginning work, "I have something which will surprise them yet." But he worked so slowly that when in 1846 he offered the novel to Colburn, he had only a few chapters to show and seems to have himself been very vague as to its eventual length. To make matters worse, the contributions Thackeray had already made to the *New Monthly Magazine* had been slight comic stories which roused little enthusiasm among either editors or subscribers, and were distinctly below the level of his contributions to *Fraser's*.

One can hardly blame Colburn, then, for sending the script back after consideration. To make his blunder still more natural, the great novel was then called "Pencil Sketches of English Society"—a title that would bother any self-respecting editor. Everyone knows the story of how, some time later, the famous title occurred to Thackeray while he was in bed, and how, leaping up, he ran three times around the room, shouting: "Vanity Fair! Vanity Fair! Vanity Fair!"

But neither the title nor the yellow covers —which were adopted for the monthly parts to distinguish them from the more successful novels of Dickens—at first helped the sale of the book. Bradley and Evans, proprietors of *Punch*, who finally assumed the risks of publication, seriously considered abandoning the idea before the novel was completed. Then came the sudden success of a Thackeray story now forgotten, *Mrs. Perkins's Ball*. Almost at the same moment, the *Edinburgh Review* printed a highly favourable notice of the unfinished novel. Sales picked up so fast that Thackeray was presently writing to a friend, "The women like *Vanity Fair*, I find, very much and the publishers are quite in good spirits regarding that venture".

Far more bitter were the struggles of Thackeray's friend, Edward Fitzgerald, to get his translation of the *Rubáiyát* of Omar Khayyám into print. Poor old Omar might almost claim to be the most neglected of all classics, for it was nearly a thousand years before the world outside of Persia paid any great attention to him, and even in Persia he was regarded as dubiously respectable. Fitzgerald originally submitted his manuscript to *Fraser's*, in which Thackeray had been most successful. The editor kept the poems for a year or more and returned them only at the author's request. In 1859 Fitzgerald at length published the *Rubáiyát* at his own expense, presenting two hundred copies to the book-seller, Bernard Quaritch. The price was to have been five shillings, but there was so little demand for these now nearly priceless little books that they were reduced first to a shilling and then to a penny. While they were at this price, Dante Gabriel Rossetti discovered them. Swinburne and Richard Burton were soon as enthusiastic as he. The price jumped at once to tuppence, and then to thirty shillings. The first edition was exhausted.

Omar had come into his own in England, though it was nine years before the next edition; but in the meantime he was meeting with an almost equally dismal and equally incredible fate in this country. At least two copies of the *Rubáiyát* reached America in manuscript, one in the hands of John La Farge and the other in the hands of Helena de Kaye, later Mrs. Richard Watson Gilder. Both seem to have been copied by hand because no printed copies could be had for love or money. Gilder and Miss de Kaye read the *Rubáiyát* together while *The New Day* was being written. Gilder later said that "these marvellous quatrains were the litany —the tragic undertone of our courtship".

Gilder, then at the beginning of his brilliant editorial career on the *Century*, was assistant to the first editor, J. G. Holland.

"I thought of publishing the whole of it in the magazine," he wrote later, "but realizing that Dr. Holland would never let it appear there on account of the *wine* therein, I gave

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up the idea." This was perhaps the worst editorial blunder of the *Century's* history, except the sad occasion when an unidentified stranger was thrown out of the office before anyone discovered that he was Robert Louis Stevenson.

The predicament, however, was not wholly new to Omar, since this very objection had been raised to his verse among the nominally dry Persian Mohammedans of the twelfth century. Omar's Persian admirers sometimes took refuge in the theory that wine was merely a symbol—a subterfuge that evidently did not occur to Gilder.

Not yet daunted, however, he brought the *Rubáiyát* to the attention of a publishing house, specializing in translations, which he does not identify except to say specifically that it was not Scribner's. The poems were again rejected. There was an obscure American edition in 1870 and a better edition a few years later, but the poems did not really come into their own in this country until Houghton Mifflin published them with Elihu Vedder's illustrations in 1894.

Poetry is notoriously hard for an editorial reader to judge—a fact which perhaps accounts not only for Omar's misfortunes, but also for the extraordinary tribulations of a poem called *Forlorn*, which William Dean Howells wrote as a young man. It was rejected by the *Atlantic* and then rejected again by a former *Atlantic* editor, after which Howells carried it with him to his consulate in Venice. The *Fortnightly Review*, to which he next offered it, likewise sent it back. It was then accepted by "a certain Mr. Lucas", who was at the moment in that mad state, "about to start a magazine". Mr. Lucas—lucky man!—died before his magazine was born; and Howells came back to the United States to join the *Atlantic* staff bringing his poem with him. From the *Atlantic* office he sent it at length to the New York *Nation*, which not only accepted it but printed it without disaster.

In spite of the little lyric's misfortunes, Howells says, "in such scant measure as my verses have pleased, it has found rather unusual favour, and I need not say its misfortunes endeared it to its author".

George Meredith, as publisher's reader for Chapman and Hall, was responsible for a number of famous rejections. Well known for the vehemence of his literary opinions, he set down as "poor", "commonplace", "bad", "impossible", and "utter rubbish" the work of novelists said to have achieved eminence later, though the publishers still tactfully conceal their names. He could be even more biting, as one may gather from these examples of his manuscript judgments:

> Feebler stuff than this might be written, but would tax an ape.

> According to the dates given this was done in a month. It has no other merit.

> This writer is an elephant.

> Dreariness of verse has hardly ever surpassed this collection.

> Must be accused of every defect that goes to make a work of fiction unreadable.

> Stated to be "for a magazine." I do not know of a magazine that would accept it.

But in spite of the acid in Meredith's critical pen, his comment was so highly valued that many authors of the day sent their work to Chapman and Hall mainly to see what he would say.

Meredith has often been accused of rejecting Hardy's first novel, *The Poor Man and the Lady*, but that is not quite a fair statement of the case. The book was originally submitted to Alexander Macmillan who recognized Hardy's talent but suggested Chapman and Hall as publishers. John Morley, reading the manuscript for Macmillan, seems to have concurred. Chapman and Hall ultimately agreed to publish the book if Hardy

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would guarantee two hundred and twenty pounds against possible losses; but Meredith urged him to withdraw the manuscript entirely, and dismissed him with the injunction: "Don't nail your colours to the mast just yet".

Hardy took the advice to heart so thoroughly that in after years he lost all track of his manuscript. Only a few pages have ever been recovered.

Meredith made many suggestions for the revision of George Gissing's first book, *The Unclassed*, and compelled two or three rewritings of *Isabel Clarendon*, which under his tutelage shrank from three to two volumes of manuscript. He also compelled two re-writings of Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm*. Apparently re-writing is a kind of magic formula for success. Long afterward, Mr. Ellis Parker Butler rewrote his famous *Pigs is Pigs* three times under the expert direction of the *Atlantic's* present editor, who accepted the story for the *American Magazine* and bestowed the immortal title. The original title was "The Dago Pig Episode".

Other famous rejections for which Meredith was responsible include *Villiers*, by Ouida; *Frank Tressilor*, by G. A. Henty, beloved by youth of the last generation; *The Heavenly Twins*, by Sarah Grand; *East Lynne*, by Mrs. Henry Wood; Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*; and Bernard Shaw's first novel, *Immaturity*. Of *East Lynne*, a tremendous popular success, Meredith said: "Opinion emphatically against it". On *Erewhon*, he commented: "Will not do". On G. B. S.'s maiden venture he said simply: "No".

Butler held his manuscript for a year before publishing it, and long afterward remarked that if he had been reader for Chapman and Hall, "and the book had been submitted to myself, I should have advised them to the same effect".

Shaw, like Hardy, withdrew his novel entirely. He never published it until it appeared as Volume I in the *Collected Works* last year. The original withdrawal, however, was by no means voluntary. His five novels suffered some fifty or sixty rejections by "all the publishers in London and some in America". *Immaturity* was on the whole luckier than the others since, according to the veracious tale of G. B. S.: "Blackwood actually accepted and then revoked. Sir George Macmillan, then a junior, not only sent me a longish and evidently considered report by the firm's reader, John (afterward Lord) Morley, but suggested to him that I might be of some use to him in his capacity as editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*".

Meredith also rejected W. H. Hudson's *Mr. Abel*, an early and now forgotten work which seems never to have found a publisher; but he was quick to see the merits of *A Naturalist in La Plata*, a book which later made an impression on William James. Meredith called it "Excellent; well observed".

American publishers have been quite as fallible as their British brethren. One of their most conspicuous victims was Rudyard Kipling, who met with relentless rejection in America when he was already well known in India and beginning to be known in London. In 1889, passing through New York on his way to England, he called at Harpers, armed with a letter from E. A. Abbey, and offered half a dozen books, all of which were promptly rejected. The British story is that the books offered to Harpers included "*Soldiers Three* and other pieces of his now famous". S. S. McClure, who was later responsible for much of Kipling's American success, gleefully gives a detailed list, which includes *Plain Tales from the Hills*, *Soldiers Three*, *The Phantom Rickshaw*, and *The Story of the Gadsbys*—all first published in 1888.

There was, however, worse to come. The rejection was only prelude to one of the most ferocious literary rumpuses of the latter nineteenth century. In December, Kipling's agent again submitted *Plain Tales from the Hills* to Harpers, and it was again rejected. Later the firm purchased American serial

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rights to several stories which they presently reprinted in book form, sending Kipling—in his own indignant phrase—"a ten-pound note as a notification of outrage perpetrated". This is the unauthorized collection of his stories which he characterized as "an unedited, unrevised, unfinished, disorderly abortion of botch-work".

There was a furious note in the London *Athenæum*, a reply by Harpers, and a counter-reply by Kipling. Whereupon, Walter Besant, William Black, and Thomas Hardy published a jointly signed letter declaring that they had been treated by Harpers with uniform fairness. To this Kipling replied in *The Rhyme of the Three Captains*, which as it stands today in the *Collected Works* looks innocent enough, but read in the light of the Harper-Kipling feud is positively blistering:

Their anchors down by London town, the Three Great Captains lay;
And one [Black] was Admiral of the North, from Solway Firth to Skye,
And one [Hardy] was Lord of the Wessex coast and all the lands thereby,
And one [Besant] was Master of the Thames from Limehouse to Blackwall
And he was Chaplain of the Fleet—the bravest of them all.
Their good guns guarded their great grey sides that were thirty foot in sheer,
When there came a certain trading brig [Kipling] with news of a privateer [Harpers].

There follow sundry unflattering allusions to "a lime-washed Yankee brig", and "the Gridiron", by which, I fear, is meant the Stars and Stripes, and the poem concludes with a bitter sneer at the three defenders of the House of Harper:

How a man may be robbed in a Christian port while Three Great Captains there
Shall dip their flag to a slaver's rag—to show that his trade is fair.

It is a quaint conceit to describe New York City as "a Christian port", but Kipling was in town only a few days.

Probably the most famous rejection story of nineteenth century American publishing is the tale of how *David Harum* went a-begging until the late Ripley Hitchcock, of Appleton's, saw its merit and accepted it on the spot. The *David Harum* rejection won popular attention partly because it was one of the rare editorial blunders of Walter Hines Page, partly because of the enormous success of the book when Appleton published it, and partly because of the pathetic death of the author on the very eve of his astonishing success.

E. N. Westcott, as every American over fifty knows very well, was a Syracuse banker. He had literary and musical tastes—"a conspicuous figure in the musical circles of central New York", says a complacent friend. But most of his life was devoted to the banking business which brought him in contact with up-State bankers of the David Harum type. He contracted tuberculosis, and while trying to regain his health at Lake Meacham, in the Adirondacks, began his famous story. He worked on it intermittently for years.

Walter Hines Page seems to have been influenced in his rejection by the comment of a New England spinster who had been an inseparable part of the *Atlantic* organization most of her life. This literary lady sent the script to Page with a disapproving note explaining that "it's vulgar and smells of the stable". Page thereupon rejected it—as did about a dozen other publishers of the day.

In spite of his long series of editorial triumphs, Page never quite lived down that rejection. "Rejected any more *David Harums* this week?" one of the partners used to ask regularly, looking in at the door of Page's office, whereupon the future Ambassador to the Court of Saint James's used to fling up his hands in a mock appeal for mercy.

The unnamed publishers who in 1896 rejected the novel on the ground that it was "not sufficiently assured of an extended or remunerative sale [it later sold about a mil-

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lion copies] to make its publication a desirable undertaking", did at least one good deed. They inadvertently referred to it as *David Harum*, and thus created the title which became famous.

Westcott lived to know that his novel had been accepted but died before it made its hit. Not long before his death he remarked: "When I am gone perhaps some of my affairs will turn up trumps, but as long as I live luck is dead against me". But even before acceptance he had consoled himself with the reflection that "I have had the fun of writing it, anyway, and nobody will ever laugh over it more than I have. I never could tell what David was going to say next".

Ariel, written long after André Maurois was an established success abroad, had almost as many misfortunes among British and American publishers as Westcott's first and only novel. But while everybody else was rejecting it, Mr. Rutger Bleecker Jewett, chief editor of Appleton's, to whom Brand Whitlock had sent a copy, was frantically writing and cabling in an effort to get in touch with the Parisian publisher. He succeeded, greatly to the profit of his firm, of M. Maurois, and of readers everywhere.

There is only too much reason to suspect that not even yet have publishers and their readers become infallible, though they print so much nowadays that they are more likely to publish bad books than reject good ones. Nevertheless, there remain horrid tales: How Macmillan years ago rejected Helen Keller's autobiography, which has since sold a hundred thousand; how Doubleday, who printed the Keller book, in turn rejected *Education of a Princess*, a huge success of the past season; how Booth Tarkington's *Monsieur Beaucaire* was ignominiously turned down; how both Doubleday and Macmillan let slip—apparently because of the price—Rupert Brooke's *Poems*, which instantly sold 75,000 copies; how one luckless publisher turned down *Main Street* on the ground that Sinclair Lewis was an unsuccessful novelist; how H. G. Wells's *The Outline of History* was rejected on the ground that it would make an interesting reading course but had no public appeal; and —wonder of wonders—how *Pollyanna* was turned down by the one American magazine that specializes in "gladness" of the saccharine variety. It was a monthly magazine also that rejected Bruce Barton's *The Man Nobody Knows* on the ground that it was too controversial. It ought to be possible to think of a dozen better reasons than that.

Even that redoubtable veteran of American publishing, John S. Phillips, when literary adviser to Doubleday, advised against William McFee's *Casuals of the Sea* in a memorandum which said:

> Without form but not void; an able unpleasant shapeless book; of interest perhaps to a few people. I would not publish it.

It was accepted all the same. Years later, when Mr. McFee, since become famous, saw the memorandum he remarked: "I expect he was absolutely right"—almost what Thomas Hardy and Samuel Butler had said about Meredith.

We owe that piquant tale to Mr. Christopher Morley, who also tells how he once impishly typed out some of Shakespeare's sonnets—typed them rather badly, as an impoverished poet might, and submitted them to Doubleday. They were rejected—but that is not the worst. They were rejected as being "below the usual standard". It is said that the rejection formula was hastily altered when the awful truth leaked out.

The plain fact seems to be that the best of authors must expect to be rejected now and again. As proof of which I may add that I had a manuscript rejected last spring myself, though it is undoubtedly one of the finest things in the English language. The lucky publisher that gets it will doubtless make a mint.

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THE BODIES OF BOOKS

by Evelyn Harter

THE commuter stopping in at a shop to buy a book on his way home, or the vacationist choosing his reading matter for the seashore or the mountains usually gives his one attention to book-making when he cracks the selected volume open in the middle to see if it has "small print". His eye has previously been attracted by the jacket, the title, or the name of a well-liked author, and if the drawing strength of any of these is great, it will triumph over his prejudice against a small type face. In all probability he knows nothing about well-proportioned margins or harmonious title-pages, and the mysteries of variations in type faces are to him the concern of fussy minds. He never thinks to look at the binding until the jacket wears out. All he wants is "a good story that won't tire his eyes".

In this attitude he is largely right. He has gone to the heart of good printing with admirable directness. If the designer of the book has fulfilled this one request—if he has provided a volume in which the words are sharp and clear, in which the line is not too long for his eye-span, in which the margins are sufficiently wide so that his thumb will not project into the story—the designer will have done the major part of his job. It is not very important for the commuter or the vacationist to know the difference between Scotch and Bodoni, or what the basic weight of the paper is, or the proportions of the square of the binding, for all that seems esoteric in printing is but the handmaiden to its common sense, and commentators have often pointed out that printing is matched only by architecture in its utilitarianism.

In smaller ways, however, the buyer's lack of a critical attitude toward his purchase defrauds him of his money's worth. It means that the publisher may sell him a glittering product of specious merit instead of a solid, well-made one. If the book has a handsome jacket and a stained top, the buyer does not stop to wonder whether its sides will warp, its stamping tarnish, or its pages fall out of the binding entirely, and when these calamities occur, he considers them an Act of God, if he considers them at all.

The chief respect in which the book-buyer's simplicity in his requirements has made him a prey appears when he carries over his quantitative system of values into his book-buying. He gets so many potatoes for two dollars, so many subway rides—why not so many pages, so much bulk in his book? He is disappointed if a slender book costs as much as a bulky one, and is inclined to feel that the publisher is saving money on him. Granting his nonchalance about the mechanics of book-making, he can hardly be expected to know that there are all sorts of ways of making a book longer and thicker than it would normally be—by wide leading between the lines, by deep sinkages at chapter heads, by the insertion of additional breaks in the text. The publisher can easily take

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advantage of his naïve idea that there is a constant ratio between the length of a book and its selling price (which should indeed be the case under ideal conditions) by adopting any or all of these tricks. As a result the customer gets a large and shoddy book wasteful of shelf-space and cumbersome to handle, instead of a natural, compact and legible one. Only in choosing poetry does the buyer adopt the qualitative scale that he uses in purchasing precious stones and neckties. In fact, unless the poet is a standard author, a thick volume of poetry is mistrusted; it is as if one were being offered many rhinestones for the price of one diamond.

Deeper than the matter of conscious criticism by the book-buyer is the attention power of the jacket. It is an open question whether publishers do not misjudge their public here. Certain it is that English and German publishers do not find it necessary to use the lurid posters which American firms encourage. The latter have subscribed to the idea (which tabloid managers and advertising experts have found profitable) of the supreme value of the picture. Granted that an appropriate illustration by a very skilful artist is effective in calling attention to the contents of a book, the query remains whether the majority of feverish and distorted depictions which clutter the bookstands do not insult the taste of the average book-buyer who by his very presence in the store places himself above the tabloid reader. There is a point at which exaggeration defeats itself, and when the eyes come upon a window of dazzling colors and bizarre shapes, they may well retreat to a more modest statement of the content of a book.

There are several impulses which direct a man to go beyond his original specification for "plain print", and one of them is actual fondness for the contents. Most people have a few yellow, dog-eared, thumb-marked volumes for which they have a deep affection, books which they would not exchange for rag-paper tomes bound in levant. Yet it is not unnatural, either, for one who likes *David Copperfield* or *Leaves of Grass* to wish to own his darling suitably arrayed, so that it is a pleasure to his eye and to his hand —so that the words have an added aura of grace through their presentation.

Here again the designer can play the reader false. He can mutilate the book so subtly, out of a desire to express his own feeling for the book or, worse yet, his own personality, that the buyer, without quite knowing what violence has been done, realizes that he is not at home in the new format, that the story or poem with which he was so familiar has suffered an indefinable change which interferes with his feeling for it. He is a humble person, this average buyer, and he is likely to feel that the fault is in himself, and that he has not kept pace with what is modern in typography.

Probably no one feels the shock of this more keenly than the author who sees his book for the first time in bound form when he last took leave of it in typewritten sheets or in galley proof. This thing that was so close to him is alien now. He must reconcile himself to it, realizing that this is what the public is going to see as his, instead of the image of it that he has been carrying around subconsciously. This little brusquerie in the running head, that flowery decoration at the chapter end—both are now inevitably tied up with the impression his book will make on the mind of the casual reader. In time he comes to accept them himself.

Another juncture at which the buyer strays from his single standard appears when he goes in search of a gift book and falls into the morasses of de luxe typography. When he is looking for a volume that will look well on his friend's library table, instead of on his own bedside reading stand, his taste alters strangely. He buys a book with as many illustrations and as much gold stamping as possible. If the type is quaint and a little hard to read, so much the better. If the book is heavy enough for his friend to use

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as a door-stop, the friend will be the more impressed with the magnificence of the gift. It is no wonder that gift books furnish the spectacle of a distinct species of book-making flourishing to provide for the Christmas trade.

Although the deviations from the simple statement of the author's thought are great in the production of so-called "trade" books, they are even greater in the making of these de luxe editions. Here a large sum of money has been set aside to be spent solely for dressing up a book. The temptations are enormous. Good printing is at once a hard but simple thing, and its beauties are not obvious. The purpose of a de luxe edition is defeated if its beauties are not obvious. Illustrations are contracted for with an artist who may or may not get the spirit of the author. (To defend themselves from illustrations many grown-ups as well as children have been known to cover an illustration with their hands in order not to see it and so spoil a preconceived image of the characters.) Decorative or coloured initials are specified, gilt edges and fancy tooling, for it is no longer the story that is being sold, but an impression of luxury.

This matter of expensive editions run amok is, however, of no great import. The honest designer will welcome the offer of extra funds to satisfy his longing for fine paper, good composition and presswork, and a sturdy binding, and the book-buyer who insists on spending money may as well spend it on overdone books as on expensive radio sets or fake antiques. The more important question is that of satisfying the man who buys a book to read by the fireside or in bed, and who would be pleased if it is a modest ornament to his shelves after he has done with it.

The American record of book-making has never been discreditable. Book typographers have not made so many mistakes and false starts as have advertising typographers, and from Franklin to Updike America has been blessed with an unusual number of common-sense heads directing its printing. Gaucheries there have been in plenty; but the over-decorativeness of the William Morris school has on the whole been avoided, as well as the bluntness of much recent German printing. In recent years the American Institute of Graphic Arts has been a force for wholesomeness, and it is perhaps worthy of remark that it has appointed a committee to study the abatement of the artificial bulking evil. Whereas British trade printing has been content to walk the solid pavement of good but dull printing, Americans have often elected to try the tight rope of experiment, from which a single false step means falling into the slough of bad taste. The annual exhibit of the Fifty Books of the Year invariably bears witness to the success of some of these, as well as to a consistent reliance on the sound fundamental principles that have been known since the days of Gutenburg, and there are at least a dozen publishers in the country who are steadily and unostentatiously turning out creditable books.

It has now been a commonplace for more than three centuries that a thing as intangible and incorporeal as an idea should start in the mind of a human being and develop until ultimately its expression becomes a three-dimensional body in space, with a shape and substance. The form of a book is a great invention—how great everyone who has tried to read manuscripts or scrolls or galley proof can realize. At its best, its excellences should be those of the good human body: that it show regularity and symmetry of feature, that it function well, that it grow old slowly and with the grace of long usage. Most of the books that are being printed now (on wood pulp) will be dust in a few hundred years. Their span is longer than that of men, but their end is as sure. A book that is worth while, however, will be reprinted; it will have new incarnations as long as its truth is recognized.

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A PORTFOLIO

DEBUNKING A FAMOUS STORY

by Margaret Lente Raoul

Only the very young, to be sure, are surprised to learn that incidents given in books as true are often wholly, or in part, imaginary. In these days of debunking it is no secret. And yet there is a certain excitement in discovering proof of this for oneself, in viewing in cold print a statement that one has reason to know is not a fact, in seeing it presented with assurance and all the impressiveness of type enclosed between the covers of a book. This was recently my experience. I was reading *A Short Life of Mark Twain*, by Albert Bigelow Paine when I arrived at these paragraphs:

> Once during the winter a report got out that he was lying at the point of death. A representative of a New York paper ferreted out his address and appeared one day at Tedworth Square. He was a young man and naïvely exhibited his credentials. His orders read:
>
> "If Mark Twain very ill, five hundred words. If dead, send one thousand."
>
> Clemens smiled grimly as he handed back the cable. "You don't need as much as that," he said. "Just say that the report of my death has been grossly exaggerated"—a remark which flashed over the wire and was next day amusing the world.

A neat story; but one which bears small relation to fact. I happen to be the daughter of the mature journalist who sent a representative to Tedworth Square for the statement; I happen to know in detail the quaint history of this incident; and I have in my possession the scrap of paper on which Mark Twain scrawled in pencil the actual message. Not that I accuse Albert Bigelow Paine of bad faith. Mark Twain also must be exonerated of any wilful intent to deceive, for in another part of the book one reads:

> It was not for several weeks that I began to realize that these marvellous dictated chapters bore only an atmospheric relation to history—that they were aspects of biography rather than its veritable narrative, built largely, sometimes wholly, from the imagination. The creator of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn had been embroidering old incidents or inventing new ones too long to stick to history now—to be able to separate the romance from the reality. Furthermore, his memory—always uncertain as to personal happenings—had become less reliable with age. He realized this, and once, in his whimsical, gentle way, remarked: "When I was younger I could remember anything, whether it happened or not; but I am getting old, and soon I shall remember only the latter".

What actually occurred was that my father, Frank Marshall White, who was in communication with Mark Twain on business matters and therefore had no need to ferret out his address, received a cable from the New York *Journal* at the end of May, 1897, that there was a report in the American press that the great man was dying in poverty in London. My father had seen him only a few days before, knew him to be in good health, hard at work, and living in ease at Chelsea. He sent a reporter to show Mark Twain the message and get a reply. The celebrated author was writing in bed, as was his custom, and, on his servant bringing in the cable, sent down the following note, which was evidently not intended to

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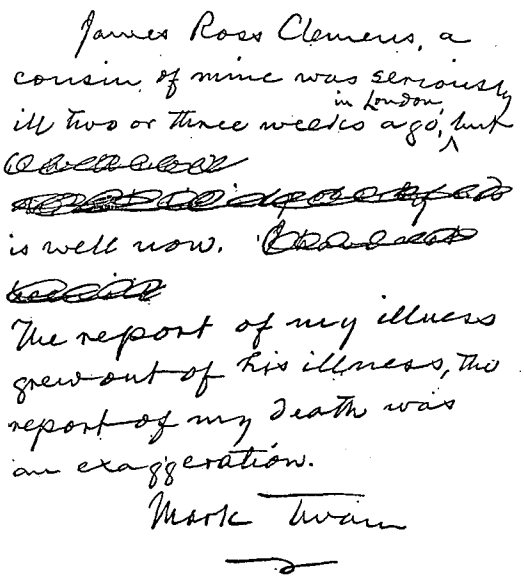
be humorous, but out of which, strangely enough, grew one of his most famous witticisms. The note read:


James Ross Clemens, a cousin of mine was seriously ill two or three weeks ago, but is well now. The report of my illness grew out of his illness, the report of my death was an exaggeration.
Mark Twain

My father sent a dispatch about the writer's condition to the *Journal* that night, in which he embodied, in Twain's own words, what he had written about his cousin in the morning. The operator who cabled it left out all punctuation marks, which is usual, unless the sender requires otherwise. The copy editor in America who prepared the despatch for the printer began a paragraph with the last clause of the second and last paragraph "The report of my death is an exaggeration", and this by process of repetition became, "The reports of my death are grossly exaggerated".

In one of the autographs of Mark Twain which I have in my possession, he writes to my father in regard to a proposed article on the Diamond Jubilee procession: "Now if you can offer me sufficient inducement, I might consider writing a newspaper article in a hurry, without my wife seeing it, and allowing a cable operator to have a first hack at it, with the printer to mangle what the operator left of it". In the instance I have mentioned it is to the mistake of the cable operator with the further help of the copy editor, that Mark Twain owes one of his most famous jests.

Although this is not a matter of devastating importance, it shows how stories can change and grow overnight and become embodied in literature to charm and astonish coming generations of mankind. I wonder how many of the tales we have been brought up to believe are equally apocryphal!

A BRIEF INQUIRY INTO THE VILLAINY OF EDITORS

by George Shively

ARE all editors scoundrels? I realize that to many this may seem merely to be putting a truism in the form of a query, but on that very account I bespeak for the matter further examination. Though the established conviction must survive, certain curious and interesting sidelights may be observed. For example, which condition is consequent upon the other? If a pious, harmless man is invested with the title of editor does he instantaneously become a scoundrel, or must he, rather, be *a priori* a scoundrel in order to become an editor? The fact that the terms are thought of and frequently used synonymously ought not to blind us to this important question of cause and effect.

But before going into that discussion, we ought perhaps out of ordinary decency to recognize that even today there exists a small, devoted minority, composed of extreme magnanimists, which holds that editors are for the most part virtuous and intelligent citizens and as such entitled to whatever protection the literary game laws afford. This group is negligible, however, because of its implausible doctrine and its insignificant enrollment, which does not, indeed, equal the total number of the editors them-

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selves. Needless to say, it includes no writers whatever. So with this meed of respect paid in passing to a stout-hearted but bemused and pathetic little band, we may concede the popular theory that editors are, essentially, scoundrels. (Perhaps for the general reader I should say that by editor I mean those who do the editorial work of book publishing houses as well as of periodicals.)

Are they such by right of birth or is it an acquired characteristic? In view of the practical unanimity of villainy among them, one is tempted to conclude that natal traits alone are involved, and that while practice may increase their proficiency, most editors are predestined to the characters they possess. This theory is strengthened by the phenomenon, commonly observed, that many editors are incapable of learning anything, even crime, and so must have been born criminals.

Yet in spite of the apparent cogency of this argument, I believe it to be fallacious, for the simple reason that I have known a few who, up to the time that they became editors, showed absolutely no stigmata of depravity. If it be contended that the fact that they became editors is in itself equivalent to a dozen such stigmata, I reply that the job was forced upon them; they did not turn to it voluntarily and so cannot possibly be accused of following an evil bent. No, we are safer in assuming that there is something in the office itself which corrupts a man and minimizes his chances of salvation. This is not to say that a born scoundrel wouldn't have a head start, but the theory stands.

In what sort of manifestations does editorial nefariousness reveal itself? Ah, that is a question indeed! As this is to be a short article, I cannot hope even to list all the deplorable exhibits. By far the best way for the layman to get an idea of the panoramic scope and hellish ingenuity in evil-doing which an editor commands is to discuss the matter with as many *authors* as he can meet. An author is incomparably well equipped to exhaust the subject, not only because his clairvoyant intelligence enables him to detect motives in the editor which the editor himself doesn't know are there, but also because his personal stake in the situation and his gift of tongues permit him to speak with peculiar verve and abandon.

Out of fairness both to the editor and to his critics, we should remark that the accusations brought against him are not generally such as to outlaw him from society. He is not primarily a fighting man, though he will upon occasion defend himself with desperate courage. I have observed one of these unhappy wretches, attacked by an infuriated Russian poetess, hold her at bay for the better part of an hour, all the while uttering sharp cries of terror and bewilderment, while he tried frantically to explain that his house never published poetry, no matter how immortal. As editors must preserve the similitude of gentlemen, he made only half-hearted attempts to return her blows. Had he not been so abominably unmanned by the torrential violence of the onslaught he might at any moment have escaped either by twisting her arm or by tripping her up, for the engagement took place at close quarters. He finally saved himself by giving her a letter of introduction to a colleague in a rival firm.

This ruse, rather than the encounter which preceded it, illustrates the sort of furtive rascality that characterizes editors. And yet who can honestly blame him? The man was fighting for his life. It is true that by writing the letter he insured an even more murderous attack upon his person a little later by the recipient of the message. But at least he gained a bit of time. And while it is difficult to understand why the instinct of self-preservation should persist in editors, it still does, and life holds its old illusion of sweetness.

A complete catalogue of editorial vices can be obtained only by consulting authors, but it is possible to enumerate a few that seem comprehensible to the generality of mankind. On the score of bad literary judgement for

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instance: what a pitifully small percentage of the books published become best sellers! And what meagre literary merit marks those that do! Or regarding hypocrisy: to what contemptible extremes of circumlocution will editors go to avoid that invigorating frankness that so encourages aspiring authors, such as the statement "Your manuscript is rotten"! Or again, what possible excuse is there for an editor's not deciding about a manuscript within a day or two, especially when the author has paid him a personal call and explained in detail the merits of the work? The usual defense, that there are thirty-eight other manuscripts ahead of it awaiting decision, is manifestly too irrelevant for serious notice and would never be offered by a man competent to hold his job. In short, examine the charges one after another and you will find the evidence—or at least the testimony—supporting them so overwhelming that, all things considered, it is a wonder that society does not demand the instant incarceration of all editors and the extermination of their young wherever found.

In the face of these admissions, it would be absurd now to attempt a right-about-face in an effort to show, by some casuistical means, that all these charges are false. We must let the editor remain a scoundrel, but it is permissible to palliate what we cannot deny. What excuse has he?

Well, he has plenty; but I shall confine myself here to the simple plea that he is obviously of unsound mind. Consider. Would any sane man undertake to make his living by trying to evaluate in terms of dollars the public response to an infinite number of small black marks on paper, considering that to no two people in the entire universe do these marks convey exactly the same meaning? Not only that: even to the editor himself the same marks suggest entirely different dollar-returns at different times. It depends upon the editor's digestion or how much he has slept or how well he likes the author. These minute variations, which the editor is powerless to detect because they are subconscious, are the really important ones. It may be objected that I speak crassly in mentioning only the dollar-values of these little black marks that are the visible symbols of literature. Of course I do; so must the editor. If he doesn't he's not an editor; he's one of the unemployed.

In spite of this gross intrusion of economics into his consciousness, the editor is an incorrigible sentimentalist. That is part of his insanity, his remoteness from reality. Because he is a sentimentalist he denies this charge vehemently, and declares that all he asks is freedom from *people*, so that he may allow his mind to form its calm, depersonalized judgements. Nonsense! In reality a shocking percentage of his interest in literature arises from his half-conscious conjectures about the people who write the books. The manuscripts they send in are their cryptic calling-cards, bearing the tantalizing challenge "Figure me out". Then how delightful it is to discover that the author of these exquisite lyrics tips the beam at over two hundred and shuffles like a baboon; that this gruesome study of infanticide in the Middle Ages was written by a kindly old gentleman in holy orders; that this incandescent love story comes from the pen of an acidulous spinster whose face would jump a cat out of the room. Under the recurrence of such disenchantments an editor may easily become unaccountable and begin babbling or playing with bits of ribbon. Even if his reason remains seated he should be pardoned for any extraordinary reflexes that may master him when by some miracle a really beautiful book gets written by a really beautiful author.

In short, and to sum up a matter that is growing too painful for further contemplation, we may admit that the behaviour of editors is generally so unaccountable and perverse as to indicate abysmal depravity. But in compassion and sorrow we should extend to them the same absolution that we grant to other madmen.

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A BLURB-WRITER REVIEWS HIS OWN FIRST NOVEL

BEING A FEW PHRASES FROM THE ADVERTISEMENTS IN A RECENT BOOK REVIEW SUPPLEMENT

by Hope Hale

He deals with the bitter tang of realization set down in un-self-conscious, stark and concrete verity, girdled in a mysterious cloud, fascinating as a detective yarn. Readers who are fond of light, humorous fiction really ought not to miss this evenly balanced, slow-moving novel wrought from the solid, earthy materials that have supplied the foundations for the better part of this gorgeous bit of Gallic foolery.

Take note, all you lovers of the beautiful, the author's scientific studies and practical labours have resulted in language carried to the point of abstract precision with the detachment of the close observer; illuminating, disturbing, deliciously droll, pitilessly biting at moments, and powerfully moving. Cast in blank verse it moves easily.

Symbolism and realism are nicely blended in the lyric beauty; one hardly knows which is which and indeed cares not at all. Certainly it is much nicer to believe, finding comfort in the bewilderment.

That sense of brevity has peopled the author's poetic scene pungently, giving the sense of communities in cosmic travail. It is his atmosphere that is most startling in its brutal sincerity—that of pink lemonade and popcorn—ordinarily serene and rational, now an aching flame.

He chronicles with meticulous accuracy and in loving detail the hows and whys and whats of his charming whimsy. He weaves a grim, ironical masterpiece of artistry with powerful rhythms and broad good humour. He explains candidly why the glamour of art beat like a pulse, carrying forward a tale fit to keep the reader on the edge of his chair.

The spirited sowing and burgeoning that this historian and sceptic describes makes of this single narrative another impressive social picture, a little difficult to understand, and therefore surest to strike and sustain the native note.

The work is, of course, designed for students. Its studies are concerned with the species found in Great Britain, a treat for fanciers of strange places and high-hearted deeds. But it is made appealing by the author's naïve earnestness and his unbounded faith that love conquers all. A careful bibliography puts the quiver of life into the book.

Much goes on besides pageants, however. Roughly, a little more than a quarter of his book is given to the note of passion, which made him shy, sensitive and often embittered. Although his treatment fills 750 pages, it is, none the less, literature.

Comedy and farce mingled in precisely the right manner make ever a toothsome dish. All this is high praise, and it will hardly go unchallenged.

ZOETROPE

by William Rose Benét

A round brown slitted drum whirled to the hand,
Queer figures jigged most curiously in motion.
A mere ingenious toy, a German notion,
The earliest cinema our childhood scanned.
Now garish pleasure-domes throughout the land
Exalt the films from west to eastern ocean,
Claiming full measure of the crowd's devotion,
Parading scenes from Nome to Samarkand.

All active life, even its very sound,
The whole wide world, caught in the camera's eye,
Moves on the screen; a marvel, and a bore.
Yet once that drum of cardboard twirling round,
That strip of printed figures flickering by
Wrought Merlin-magic on the nursery floor.

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FANNIE HURST: SOB-SISTER OF AMERICAN FICTION

by Harry Salpeter

THE overpainted little shopgirl whose alleged mind can travel no further than the distance from the first to the last page of the worst tabloid, daily, and from the first to the last page of the worst Confessions magazine, monthly, may not know Glenway Wescott from a Pullman car or Elizabeth Madox Roberts from a peak in the Sierra Nevada, but she will know that Fannie Hurst is an author.

This is not meant to be contemptuous of Miss Hurst. Our hypothetical shopgirl's ignorance of Glenway Wescott and Elizabeth Roberts is not, by itself, proof of the sublimer qualities of these writers; such ignorance may indicate, obliquely, a temperamental, or, let us say, emotional, limitation in these writers as pronounced as our shopgirl's admitted intellectual limitations. Miss Hurst may take as a compliment the shopgirl's awareness of her, Miss Hurst's, existence, an awareness which completes, I believe, Miss Hurst's long-standing awareness of the shopgirl's existence as something other than a half-humanized automaton on the other side of a counter.

Miss Hurst has striven toward autonomy as a short-story writer and novelist along the road of advocacy of under dogs, practically all of them of feminine gender. She began with Woman (in capital letters), in the feminist conception of her, and ever since she has been writing fiction on such modern variations of the sex as shop girl, servant girl, mistress and cloak model. One of her first (and abortive) efforts was a feature story entitled *Why I am a Suffragette, from the Point of View of a Wife and Mother*, the author attempting to hide her identity under the pen name of Fan Niehurst. One of her penultimate, if not final, efforts will be, she hopes, a contribution to morals and anthropology bearing some such title as *The History of Woman in the History of the Race*, in at least three volumes, or, possibly, five. (I believe I have the honour to be the first to announce this intention of Miss Hurst's.) Miss Hurst has a keen consciousness of herself as the woman-in-the-novelist. There are women who, when they write, take pride in the temporary destruction of their sex-consciousness on the altar of artistic integrity. Not man writes, nor woman either, but the artist in man and woman, a passionate neuter dedicated to understanding and communication of that understanding. Perhaps that is an ideal for pure art in fiction, but for Miss Hurst it is an impossibility, an impossibilty which, I suspect, has, for her, the additional characteristic of being undesired. No one could possibly mistake the sex of the author of *Back Street*, were no author indicated on its title page. Ray Schmidt, the sympathetically drawn "mistress", has in Miss Hurst not only a portraitist, but an advocate whose advocacy is none the less forceful for being oblique and suggested within the confines of the portrait. And should Miss Hurst ever attempt a work of pure—meaning sexless—art, I am certain that the warmth of her sex, converted into

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sexual advocacy of woman, as woman, and of woman as a minority in a world made by and for men, would thaw through that intention and leave nothing of it. As a story-teller her chief problem has been to make the reader shed the tears from which she has forced herself to refrain. She is the sob-sister of American fiction in the sublimated sense of that vulgar phrase. I use that phrase not as a literal characterization, but only for the most human connotations that are to be extracted from it.

I called on Miss Hurst in her duplex apartment off Central Park West, the central room of which she has converted into a most satisfactory compromise between a reception room and a Gothic chapel; I called to ask what views, if any, she held about her work. "Surely," I said to her, "you have a message in your novels, over and above the story that you tell?" She affirmed, without affirmation.

"A message is not a bad thing to have if you have one," she said. "I'd like to have many. Some of the best men and women who ever lived had messages. I am not prepared to say that I have a message. . . . I must have a message," she finally conceded, "because I am so passionately anxious to awake in people in general a sensitiveness to small people. Most of us are only half-alive to the problem of being. Some day I shall write a book in which I shall convey this feeling of mine about the insensitiveness to life that most people carry around with them and I shall call it *This Half-Dead World*. I have a great respect for just a life. There are artists without an art all around us, and the world is better for their being in it; we owe more to them than to the conscious artists. The contribution of the woman in my kitchen is immeasurably superior to what has been done by the most conscious artist."

As a story-teller Miss Hurst has manifested her profound respect for "just a life". Not otherwise could she have sounded the heights and the depths in the life of a (superficially) stupid and inarticulate servant girl as she did in *Lummox*; nor paint in with almost too loving detail every episode and crisis and every one of the numerous panels in the shifting screen of background in the life of a woman who loved too well, if not wisely, as she did in the story of Ray Schmidt, in *Back Street*; nor devote herself with such thoroughness in mastering, and in attempting to make vivid, the routine of a store, as she did in *Five and Ten*. In *Mannequin*, which she wrote for a $50,000 prize which a magazine was offering and which, as a book, she disowns, she carried forward the Hurstian tradition, her central subject being a cloak model. This does not mean that she has not made efforts to clamber out of the groove which her instinctive emotional predilections have dug for her. In *Appassionata* she attempted to portray the state of soul of a Catholic girl in whom religious ecstasy dominated, and in *A President Is Born*, she attempted to portray the life of a typical American boy before he has achieved the Presidential distinction, illuminating the text of the fiction with foot-notes supposed to have been drawn from records of his later life. But the reviewers and her readers remember *Lummox* and *Five and Ten* and *Back Street* because there is in these, as there is not in the others, the *echt* Fannie Hurst.

She is a woman of superb vitality. Her health might be called radiant. She has done much more than most writers of her age, in bulk of output and in achievement, and will do more because her normal day is at least three hours longer than the normal day of the average person. She never requires more than four or five hours of sleep. That radiant health and the sanguine temperament that is produced by it and the consciousness of success in her career allows her not only to do more than most persons but to project schemes more ambitious than most persons of her limitations—and who has not limitations? —would dare confess. For not only does she plan to do a History of Woman—for which already she has done years of reading in history, science and anthropology—but she plans nothing short of a *Comédie Humaine*.

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"There never was a novelist who didn't dream of doing a *Comédie Humaine.*" Dream of it, certainly and leave it at that. But: "I've got this canvas hung in the back of my mind and I'll do it; I know I'll do it. I've got to live a little longer, feel a little more, care a little more. I know now I have an immunity; I know now I'm going ahead, going to do what I want to do. Nothing is going to stop me. I have my coat of armour now. But it's taken far too long, too many gory years". By her coat of armour she means to imply that state of indifference, or superiority, to the barbs and lances of hostile criticism.

The image which the name Fannie Hurst evokes in the average newspaper reader's mind includes also the publicist in her, a publicist for causes, including the lost and threatened. Most publicized, most ubiquitous, more often rushing into print where authors more discreet fear to tread. She is a member of committees, she is a speaker at mass meetings for the miners of Pennsylvania, she incites protest against the carrying out of sentences involving the death penalty—a most natural consequence of her respect for "just a life". When about a dozen years ago she became Mrs. Jacques S. Danielson there was so much publicity humming and buzzing over the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Danielson were to meet only once or twice a week at breakfast that one wondered whether this marriage hadn't really been arranged by the publicity department of Miss Hurst's publisher, and ever since Miss Hurst is quoted as something of a female Yogi on the subject of companionate marriage. One wanders into a news-reel theatre—as I did—to find Miss Hurst projected four times life-size and expressing in four-times magnified vocal volume her opinions on the behaviour of Americans in Europe. J. B. Priestley delivers himself of a light remark or two about the habits of Americans in buying books whose leaves they do not trouble to cut and immediately Miss Hurst is heard from in a defense of American institutions against spoiled English novelists, a defense of the kind that no shopgirl would fail to comprehend. Miss Hurst lectures, she debates, she talks over the radio, she poses for the camera, she is interviewed. Her enviable vitality spills over from the pages of her short stories and novels into whatever vehicle offers itself. She is healthily opinionated; she does care about a lot of things, even if she does pretend to care about more, for purposes that are tinged with publicity motive. She does care about "just a life", without which concern no one, it seems to me, can be a novelist. No matter how raw may be her opinion on any subject, much can be forgiven for that concern for "just a life".

If she were to begin all over again, I asked her, in what way, if any, would she modify her method, her procedure.

"I would do precisely what I have done, all over again, because I have never pandered to a public or a policy. If I write down, it is because I am down. If I write low, I am low. The mere fact that one has a large public is, in itself, a sufficient commentary on one's work. If I have achieved a popular success it is because I am precisely the stature of my work. But I agree that might lies in the minority of opinion." For like every story-teller who has a large public and commands large prices from magazines, and large advances from her publisher and large sums for the right to translate her stories to the screen, Miss Hurst yearns for that final accolade which it is in the gift, if not the inclination, of the select critics to bestow. For the most discriminating, *Lummox* remains Miss Hurst's most valid claim to recognition and distinction.

Happy is that author who hasn't much of a biography outside of a bibliography. Fannie Hurst's history, in the tragic connotation of that word, seems to have ended, according to the semi-publicity biography of her produced by her publisher, at that precise moment when Robert H. Davis, raising his eyes from a script with something of the emotion that stirred within Keats when he raised horizon-wide eyes from Chapman's *Homer*—when

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Bob Davis said: "Fannie Hurst, you are a writer!" Accolade!

Her life, up to that point, included the more or less common experiences of being born (at Hamilton, Ohio), of romping, reading and writing through her teens (in St. Louis), of acquiring her first rejection slips for blank verse masques, from the *Saturday Evening Post*, among other periodicals; of exhibiting a showy precocity at high school and of matriculating at college, Washington University at St. Louis.

There she distinguished herself as an all-round student, in sports and other extra-curricular activities, her vitality and drive making her as good as, if not better than, any other two classmates. She made a stab at newspaper work, but fell down; continued to acquire rejection slips from the *Saturday Evening Post*, published a virgin effort—a vignette—in *Reedy's Mirror* and was graduated. For a year or two afterwards she lingered on at home, storming the local newspaper offices, conducting a mail bombardment of the offices of New York magazine editors, writing and producing a one-act play and, finally, taking an East-bound train on the pretext of taking post-graduate courses at Columbia.

She studied Anglo-Saxon three times a week and spent the rest of the time writing short stories, calling on editors with manuscripts, wandering through odd corners of the city, and holding down odd jobs through which to enrich her knowledge of the city and its people. She worked in a department store, appeared before the footlights, took a steerage trip to Europe, lived in a room over an Armenian tobacconist's shop in the Oriental quarter of New York. She spent her first New Year's Eve along the Bowery, had supper at a hobo shelter and walked the streets until dawn in the uncertain light of which she saw New York from Brooklyn Bridge. And then an editor hereinbefore mentioned, one of those to whom she had patiently been taking her short stories, said to her, "Fannie Hurst, you can write".

Came the dawn, a more roseate one than that which she had viewed that first New Year's Day in New York, and all the concomitants. Magazine builders began bidding for the cornerstone they had rejected and placing it, so to speak, in its appointed place. Short stories appeared in magazines, were collected in book form, pictures were made from them; she wrote some plays; her opinions on matters relating to Woman began to matter to city editors and conductors of symposia for women's magazines. Having known what it was to write and re-write, peddle and re-peddle, she found now that all she had to do was to write. The bulk of her work since then—quality apart—is impressive testimony to her vitality.

And now that she has what she strove to obtain, and has it up to the hilt, she confesses that her achievement has a slight taste of ashes at its core. "I want that peculiar, exotic thing called happiness and I am not closer to it than most people. To be a successful lady writer—that is not enviable; the very innuendo of the phrase is unpleasant. All I have is a knapsack—a pretty full knapsack, I admit. I own nothing but these sticks of wood"—and her hand included the more or less precious antiques in furniture and potteries, screens, textiles, and paintings, "and, fortunately, I don't want anything more. I never want to own things."

More precious to her than the overflowing knapsack is the consciousness that Fannie Hurst has made good—and will make better.

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THE PASSING OF THE YANKEE

by John Macy

THE three farmhouses stand within neighbourly distance of each other on the outskirts of the town. One, with sagging backbone and eyeless windows, has been long unoccupied. The second, freshly painted, with screened porch and green-striped awnings, is tenanted only in summer by people from the West, who may be related to the original owners. The third is swarmingly inhabited by Lettish peasants, who know how to make vegetables and flowers grow and have a manual versatility not much inferior to that of the New Englanders who built the house. There is not a Yankee in sight. . . .

In Boston, a few miles away, less than a year ago there was a long and loud celebration of the tercentenary of the founding of the Bay Colony. Parades . . . patriotism . . . oratory . . . schoolboys with real guns . . . "The Spirit of 1776" . . . Faneuil Hall . . . ghosts of history . . . aspirations toward the past. . . .

The Yankee is obsolescent—not only the Yankee embalmed or immortalized in fiction and biography, but the living Yankee whom some of us remember in the flesh. Millions of his children exist from Portland in Maine to Portland in Oregon; the population center of racial New England has long been west of the Berkshires. But the true old Yankee is vanishing or degenerate. Some good Americans of another provinciality than that of New England may be unmoved by the decay of a not wholly admirable breed. Some New Englanders will deny that the stock is falling off, or will acknowledge it only by overrating their forefathers. Reverence for ancestors affords consolation to those who lack confidence in the merits of their own generation. Perhaps the intellectual eminence from which New England has slipped was never so lofty as it appears to us who look back too piously up the slope. Visitors from other parts of America regard New England as a playground or as a museum of romantic relics; they rattle the dry bones of history, and in a lighter mood disinter extinct jokes about Mayflower furniture, Boston as a state of mind, codfish, beans, conscience, Cabots, Puritanism.

Long ago Oliver Herford, whose wit is never stale, called Boston the abandoned farm of literature. He was leaving for New York. It is fair to remember that at the end of the last century no literary field in any part of America was conspicuously fertile. The New England acres were not deserted; they were worked out, and the younger tillers, native and imported, could not restore them to fertility. H. G. Wells thought that about the year 1875 Boston had reached intellectual repletion; its mind had filled up. That may be true. We have to depend largely on literary tourists, especially those from England, for wisdom about the United States. Whether or not in the third quarter of the nineteenth century the New England mind had received

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all that it was capable of holding, it is true that at the end of the century it was running low in literary and artistic content. History, biography, science, and scholarship continued to flourish. But the interpretation of life in imaginative literature, especially fiction, all but ceased. In the expression of life, if not in life itself, the New Englander declined. For all his local pride and manifold activities, he was losing interest in himself or losing the faculty of making himself interesting in words. Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary Wilkins Freeman have no successors in New England. Their followers (though not, in any unfavourable sense, imitators) are Miss Willa Cather, who is avowedly indebted to Miss Jewett, and Miss Zona Gale of Wisconsin, and Miss Ruth Suckow of Iowa. New England moved west; and women are the chief bearers of its tradition, as, indeed, women founded it and carried it on most ably upon its original soil. New England fiction, native, natural, observant, began in the last third of the nineteenth century with Rose Terry Cooke. As for the men, I cannot find anything which worthily succeeds Rowland E. Robinson's funny and pathetic Vermonters. Yankee character in fiction disappeared because Yankee character in life lost its savour.

In the year when Boston was celebrating three hundred glorious years Mary Wilkins Freeman died. Newspapers and literary journals outside Boston noticed her death but made little of it. All her important work was done thirty years ago; her body had outlived her power and her reputation, and she had passed into literary history as a writer of village tales once admired but no longer read. Her genius was original, not of a school. Her traceable forerunners in New England, mostly women, Rose Terry Cooke and Harriet Beecher Stowe of *Oldtown Folks*, were more sentimental, and let their tears leak into their stories. Mary Wilkins had no tears except the tears of things. And theories of style and construction would have puzzled her, except for such elementary matters as correct syntax and accuracy in the use of words, which she had learned and taught in a strict schoolroom. She must have been bewildered and perhaps was spoiled later by the praise of too literary critics who said that her story, *A Village Lear*, was worthy of Maupassant. Probably she was not aware of the existence of Russian writers who were digging into hard soil and narrow lives and finding values at once local and universal. Her material was close at hand, plain and simple; she had the genius to see it and render it objectively. Her stories are as primitive as folk-tales and almost as anonymous. This does not mean that she was a blind genius stumbling on masterpieces by the grace of God. She knew her material thoroughly, believed in it intensely, and early discovered what she could do with it. She repeated a score of times the unmistakable Mary Wilkins story, did it more and more deliberately, until finally fame overtook her and she became too much aware of herself as a literary person. Then the young Mary Wilkins died and the older woman produced nothing memorable. Perhaps she had exhausted her real material.

Her material is the village, partly stricken with senility by weakening emigrations of youth to the West and to neighbouring cities, and not yet modernized by the city influences which have obliterated old-fashioned country characteristics. Mary Wilkins does not see and convey the idyllic charm of the village or its lighter comedy; she is no humorist. She feels the pathos, the tragedy, the hardness, the bitterness of village life, but she does not hold her people up to pity or scorn. There is no bitterness in her own attitude and not a touch of deliberate satire. So far as her personality shows at all, she is rather timid and tender. The gentle woman merely records a grimness for which she is not responsible, in limited and thwarted lives which she understands but does not wilfully create. It would be more difficult to read a life of her

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into her stories, or from them, than to conjecture the shadowy biography of Emily Dickinson from her poems. The lingo of our time would deal with Mary Wilkins and her characters in terms of "repressions", of libidos confined in narrow human barrels with the bungs driven in tight by a Puritan mallet. Some critics have noted a resemblance between the contours of her characters and her angular bony phrasing. This may mean simply that her style fits her substance. Her phrasing is economical and unadorned, but it is easy, flexible, muscular, both when it reproduces the talk of her people and when it is her own essential pure English. She has neither the grace of Miss Jewett nor the poetry of Miss Alice Brown, but at times the hard, unlovely substance is wrought into an exquisitely delicate fabric. Mary Wilkins never defends the dignity of New England country folk, as Miss Jewett does, or questions the value of the life about her. She merely accepts it and lets it speak for itself. Only an artist can do that.

II

Almost all New England fiction that has a flicker of vitality deals with the non-urban Yankee, the farmer, the villager, the fisherman, the country doctor, the minister, and their womenfolk. The cities, both as communities and in their individual inhabitants, had more distinction and charm when they were only overgrown country towns than since they have become like all second-rate and third-rate American cities. In fifty years no writer that I can think of has been able to find much colour in Boston, local or cosmic. Even the gentleman from Ohio and Venice, Howells, found his best New England characters in the country, in Squire Gaylord, for a modern instance. Howells proved in a mildly persuasive style that Bostonians could be as dull in fiction as they were becoming in fact, and administered to New England benumbing blows with the sandbag of pseudo-realism, incredibly heavy in the hand of a man who had considerable verbal competence and a little humour. Then he moved to New York and became the Dean of American Letters.

New England has thriven, in every way that it ever did thrive, by virtue of its rural and semi-rural population. When the country Yankee degenerated his city cousins went down with him. New England simply stopped being New England, except in scenery. It ceased to be amusingly and vigorously provincial, and at the same time it lost some of the acquired civilization that it had imported and naturalized at great pains and expense. The country Yankee was indigenous, not immediately European, and not, like the cultivated Bostonian, a poor imitation of European. The old-fashioned Yankee had positive and varied characteristics; there were many kinds of him. To put the negative before the positive, he was exactly not like the caricature of him in, say, *The Old Homestead*, or, to take a younger and more tragic stage caricature, he was not like the people in *Desire Under the Elms*, which might just as well have been *Desire Under the Palms*. The stage Yankee no more resembles the real one than the cartoonist's Uncle Sam looks like any American anywhere, or than the figure conceived by the draftsmen of the metropolitan press and labelled "Western Farm Vote" looks like any man that the whole force of the Pinkerton Detective Agency could find in Iowa or Kansas.

The Yankee often wore a beard, like that whittling philosopher with the unmistakable English Puritan name, Thoreau; or he shaved his chin, like Mr. Emerson and Mr. Webster. The Yankee was tall or short or middling, lean or fat or middling, fair or dark or middling, as it happened to happen. (I speak of him in the masculine; his women had correspondingly varied characteristics.) His voice was high or low, his speech rapid as that of Phillips Brooks or slow with what is called a drawl. He spoke with thoracic fulness or with a nasal twang. He was a tee-

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totaller or a moderate drinker or a rum-hoister. He was a church-goer or indifferent or a disbeliever. Sometimes he was a cantankerous rebel; sometimes he was a staunch supporter of law, order and authority; more often, like most of us, he quietly conformed to prevalent conventions and customs. He may have been afflicted with a New England conscience, of which I have heard much but of which I cannot find clearly marked geographical or racial limits. He may have been a devil with the women, and found women to meet and encourage his deviltry. But in general he was outwardly obedient to the moral code, kept clear of scandal, and had a large legitimate family. If New England life contained the stuff of which high romance and thrilling intrigues are made, fiction and biography have ignored it or concealed it.

III

Then what was this Yankee that I say is passing? Am I not smearing him into the common human herd, failing to label him with positive qualities, and so denying that there is any reason for writing about him at all? My Yankee lives in my memory by two characteristics which are admirable but not in any sense moral and are only indirectly related to the nobler traits of human nature; these characteristics are his precise, effective use of words, and his peculiar humour. I love the way he talked and the true records of his talk, his daily verbal habits, not the professionally comic representations of him, nor, in my present view, the loftier language of the Age of Emerson. My Yankee was of a later time. His talk, his style, were matters of phrasing, not of dialect. There never was any Yankee dialect as there are county dialects in England. The New Englander spoke and wrote the traditional King's English with slight localisms of pronunciation, intonation and usage, which varied still more slightly in different parts of New England. The style imputed to Hosea Biglow and to the Deacon of *The One Hoss Shay* by the parochial classicists of Cambridge and Boston, Mr. Lowell and Dr. Holmes, and twice removed from reality by being put into verse, was never heard from any living lips. At best it suggests actual talk to those who know the Yankee, somewhat as the speech of English actors, who think we think they are talking Oxford, may suggest English. Yankee speech, as heard by acute listeners and as recorded by competent phoneticians, so far as our alphabet will permit, was usually clear and intelligible to any ordinary English-speaking person. And it was generally straight in syntax and accurate in the choice of words. Common literacy was an older tradition in New England than in any other part of the English-speaking world, except, perhaps, Scotland. The Yankee prided himself on his correctness, and his reading was sound if not extensive. The country newspapers were as a rule well written in the days before the metropolitan press corrupted them and finally, mercifully, put most of them out of business. The Yankee was a reader of books. That is fairly indicated by the fact, easy to sneer at and not to be taken to prove too much, that Massachusetts is the only commonwealth, state, or political unit in the world, in which every town has a public library; and in most towns in Massachusetts and other New England states the library was established before the name of Carnegie was heard of. That partly explains why the Yankee, not the person of literary talent but the common man, did not murder the English language. Rather he enriched it and gave it neat twists and turns which were not merely smart in a citified way, but were pungent and vital.

It is not possible to put your finger on the precise quality of Yankee humour; and it is difficult to illustrate it because in the very act of introducing an example you kill your story before you come to it. That more inclusive thing, American humour, has never been adequately defined or officially nation-

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alized. English critics or American professors of English, who have been educated at Harvard or Oxford or somewhere, exaggerate the importance of the element of exaggeration in American humour. This is an ingredient in some comic mixtures from Franklin to Mark Twain, and Rabelais was born in Chicago. There are some American recipes in which exaggeration does not appear. One favourite formula in New England, deliberately or unconsciously used, consists in a lean literalness of statement, delivered in a level unemphatic tone and sliding down to deprecatory understatement, which may be the obverse form of exaggeration. It was a natural mode of thought in Thomas B. Reed and was brought by him to ultimate verbal refinement. He was almost a literary artist, and he never raised his voice to be a smarty. Many of his sayings are too well remembered to need requotation. The best are the simplest, with no evident intention to be witty. When he is proposed as a likely candidate for President, he says, "Well, they might go further and fare worse—and they probably will". When one congressman, pointing at another congressman, says, "I have asked the gentleman a question. He is silent, mute, dumb"—Reed adds, "And he ain't saying a word". Reed was more clever than his neighbours at home or in Washington, and he had not much democratic affection for most of them; but he belonged, at home in Maine, to a people who with no evident ambition to be clever (they use "clever" to mean obliging) describe a parsimonious man as "closer than the bark of a tree—and the inside bark at that".

An American critic whose blood and perception are French suggests that there was a Yankee twist in the mind of Whistler and that his deadly accurate and low-pitched remarks slid under the acrobatic brilliancy of Oscar Wilde. I will not try to prove that by specimens. The bright sayings of great men grow heavy with their very celebrity. A few anecdotes of humbler origin, some old and often repeated, some perhaps new to the reader, may be more generally representative of the Yankee mind.

A financier and philanthropist was gathered to his fathers. The funeral was held on a terrifically hot day. The dead man had been benefactor of several religious institutions, and several parsons delivered long eulogies. A weary mourner turned to his neighbour, a deacon: "Did you know him well?" "Oh, very well—for many years. A remarkable man." "Yes, he was a darn smart fellow! If he'd been runnin' this funeral it would have been over in half an hour." This may have been the occasion that provoked an Episcopalian, weary of nonconformist eloquence, to say, as he came away, "I thank God I belong to a church that stops the mouths of fools!" A Baptist minister turned and snapped, "Yes, and of archangels".

In my town the state built an institution for the feeble-minded. The question came up whether the town should extend its water system and supply the institution or whether the institution should install its own plant. There was much debate at the town meeting. The tedious discussion was relieved by one remark: "Mr. Moderator, it seems to me that there's two kinds of idiots in this town, those that are in that school and those that ain't".

Ed Robbins was one of the most prosperous men in town, and the death of an uncle left him more prosperous. But he kept on with his personally-conducted milk route, chiefly because he liked to drive around town and talk to folks. One of his customers was a solitary spinster who lived on the edge of the town. A man who was repairing the kitchen sink overheard and reported this colloquy: "Miss Lathrop," said Mr. Robbins, "it must be lonely for you out here". "Yes, it is lonely sometimes." "What you need is a man." "Oh, no! The Lord is always with me." "Well, Miss Lathrop, that may be all right out here, but down in the 'center' folks would talk."

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One matter-of-fact statement by a Nantucket captain I have tried on several people and have sometimes missed fire with it or had to wait for it to sink in. He was staring at a crate of chickens on the wharf; the thing was made of slats and laths, criss-cross and slantwise, every which way. "That chicken-coop", he observed, "looks as if some man had made it himself".

These gentle pleasantries rather than stern moral virtues and cramping vices form in my aural and visual memory a sort of composite portrait of a Yankee who is no more. I shall not look upon, I shall not hear, his like again. The made-up witticisms of the glittering gutter of Broadway do not console me. Nor has the Irish-Roman invasion, which has all but triumphed, brought much that is fresh and sparkling to replenish the drying New England streams. The Irish are not a danger, as Protestant patriots once thought them; they are a disappointment. They have prospered commercially and politically; intellectually they have not prevailed. Some of us Yankees who are free from racial and religious animosities hoped that the conquerors might supplant our decadent stock and bring to the old colony a new life and a new literature. But the Celtic genius, which gives to Mother Ireland, with her small brood of home-grown children, a persistent brilliant and beautiful literature, an enchanting speech, has not burned bright in New England, or anywhere in America. It is as if the conqueror had been absorbed like the Norsemen in Normandy. Except that in America the invader acquired no new culture to take the place of that he had lost. For the Yankee himself was losing his power, and so he left no capable successors either in his own children or in the children of the non-English races.

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LEONARD CLINE: AFTER-WALKER

by Dorothy Teall

LEONARD CLINE was a victim of the too-much, a torrential nature which habitually overshot itself. When he published his first novel, *God Head,* in 1924, it was not simply a brilliant piece of work; according to Laurence Stallings it showed that he could "write rings around half a dozen of our best ten novelists". If reading Dostoievski is like suffering an illness, to read *God Head* is to be in one's own flesh a fugitive revolutionary, a frustrate intellectual lashed by his hungers.

Cline's life, as well as his art, was an instance of the too-much. It was not enough, for him, to get mixed up in a fist-fight like any drunken ex-reporter. When he fought it was with a ne'er-do-well whom he had befriended and whom now he shot and killed. For a deed that had taken a few minutes in the spring of 1927, the State of Connecticut imposed, that fall, an imprisonment of one year and a fine of a thousand dollars. This sentence was shortened by a couple of months for good behaviour. Cline was released from jail in July 1928, a convert to Roman Catholicism—in fact a re-convert, since he had turned to the Church in his first youth. In January 1929, having come to New York to earn enough to save his Connecticut farm, he drank to his sixth month out of prison. A day or two later he was found dead: too much.

More than a year after his death the ghost of his excessive energy stalked abroad in a volume of verse that took its title from the final entry, *After-Walker.* This is a piece of some length celebrating the experience of conversion.

> So, being hanged and done at last,
> He could look back, no more aghast—

thus begins the picture of the poet's prostration and recovery.

> Now by these tokens he is dead:
> He has the sun within his head
> And has of immortality
> One new more luminous simile.

Hugh of St. Victor might have written, "Of four parts even is death's day seen", but not Hugh of St. Victor nor any other schoolman would have developed the theme as Cline does:

> Of four parts even is death's day seen.
>
> The first is brown that yearns to green;
> Little winged hearts in joyous flight
> Fleck with their lauds the swim of light.
>
> But the green deepening warm and lush
> Fulfills itself at last in gush
> On gush of yellow, white and red;
> And the light tiding overhead
> Is sweet with odors that were prayer.
>
> But the light tiding, hovering there
> Descends now binding dappled green
> And mottled blue in one hot sheen
> And harmony of limpid gold.
> Oh, boon and amorous, this of old

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Was the one hour Love chose to be
The time of her nativity
Who, born immaculate on earth,
Kept her white body for Love's birth!

This is a truth the dead know well.

But the gold wanning with one knell
Of throbbing saffron fades away.
Brown is the ending of death's day.
And reft of wings the haggard light
Like dawn at cockcrow quivers white.
This was the hour when Love thought best
The babe should wail at Mary's breast:
Himself, and on his brow her kiss.

The dead know well the truth of this.

When I first saw *After-Walker*—Cline sent me a carbon copy from his jail at Tolland, Connecticut—this passage, the third of its six movements, pleased me least. Yet I find myself singling it out now as representative of his power. As a writer Cline is tremendously alive, feeling vividly and acting violently. Sensation, action, are stronger in him than contemplation, but if this amounts to a disability in contemplation it is only such as many of us might acknowledge.

My first impression of Leonard Cline, meeting him in 1919, was of a young fellow slightly over the average height, sandy-coloured, with nothing more distinctive about him than a pair of thick-lensed spectacles. I gathered that he had had a meagre boyhood in Detroit, supported by a mother who edited a page for a newspaper; that he had left the University of Michigan before completing his course, had taken a job on a country paper, and from that had moved on finally to the Detroit *News*. They gave him a page to fill every Sunday with news of music and the art world; he also assembled some columns of book reviews. During the week he covered the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's concerts and the programs of visiting artists.

In the spring of 1919 he was in Boston to report Wilson's Mechanics Hall speech. On this trip he met my brother, Edward N. Teall. Cline told him that he was looking for someone not too expensive to write him a piece about music in New York now and then. I had just joined the staff of *Musical America*, and my brother effected the obvious connection. The mature, probably even middle-aged, Leonard Cline who wrote me his instructions from Detroit soon inspired me with a sentiment of veneration. The telephone over which I first heard his not very positive voice, on one of his New York excursions, was an instrument of shock. Eating dinner with him was still more shocking, for it was like an evening with any personable boy. He was older than he looked, however, at an age when every year counts double—twenty-five; married, and the father of two children.

During the years that I was writing for the *News* Cline was in and out of New York at longish intervals. I remember a luncheon with him at Jack's, when the menu was composed like an experimental symphony; and I remember running into him in a theatre when he looked God-intoxicated; and I remember standing with him on a street corner when the wind set him shaking so that I thought he would be dead of pneumonia the next day, but didn't dare tell him to button up his coat; and I remember sitting with him one noon in a dark, smelly Greenwich Village basement, though I can't recall what we ate or drank or said, except that I was acutely unhappy and that I still, in summoning up his face, am in the phrase of *After-Walker* "beset by topaz eyes".

Such is my recollection of his appearance and his circumstances. It is probably no more truthful than a photographic negative, which, though it presents accurate enough data, is misleading as a picture. What I actually saw in those rare meetings with Leonard Cline, what I actually heard, seemed a little drab, a little flat, against the notion I had gathered from correspondence with him. In reality he was a blend of the urbane and the callowly youthful, like his city—less a blend than a

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stratification. His hair was a fairly dark brown, his eyes blue-gray—the typical American combination; his spectacles were not unusual, his voice had body, and he was a good talker. He had been sent to private schools and generally brought up in comfort. The editors of the *News* valued him highly; in fact, although I recall his telling me plaintively that the boys on the paper felt he was no longer one of them since he had gone arty, he had perhaps an excess of indulgence from those in high places. For the charm that won him such consideration he paid in a certain isolation. Albert Jay Nock has said of Rabelais that he was no mere clown for the vulgar but addressed the independent spirits "encysted in society". The phrase holds good for the artist himself, in any medium or mood, and for Leonard Cline, typical of the American artist in an important respect: he was an *enfant gâté*, a poor little rich boy, as any middle-class American is when measured by the stricter standards of the European; and he was hungry for the sense of human nearness.

Lacking an artistically sympathetic group, the artist is more than ever dependent on philosophy. Mr. Joel Spingarn is the latest to point out, in his lectures at the New School, the necessary reliance of the poet on the philosopher, and the transubstantiation of philosophy, in the poet's spiritual chemistry, into faith. Cline's vagrancies were mostly searches for faith, in humanity singly and collectively. Among the manuscripts he left was a third of a novel, *Hosea*. Complete as it stands as a long tale, it resumes his favourite pursuit of reconciliation with the world, although this time his subject is the fresh one, for him, of the neurotic Puritan. Here as elsewhere Cline's expression is characterized by a turbulence and variety more proper to the Elizabethans, with their genius of the imagination, than to this present day of introspection; still the thing he tried oftenest to communicate was psychological and interior, the quest for faith. In this sense there was in his life as well as in his work consistency of direction. He dedicated *After-Walker* to his first wife, Louise Smurthwaite Cline, to whom he was to have been remarried; and its title-poem tells a tale of the sense of guilt and its resolution which must be the core of any faith.

Before a careful reader of that volume reaches this climax he has meditated numerous short lyrics in which the furniture of the American everyday is as tangible and no more graceless than knives and forks and hard-boiled eggs in Breughel's fantasy of Cockaigne. *Battery Park, Vigil, Return, Ragman,* are examples. Cline's worst failure may have been to reverse the ideal progress from philosophy, through faith, to literature; moving from literature to faith and toward philosophy, he made faith too much an act of will, so far as it was formal and credal. But in such verses as *Still Life*, written apparently soon after his marriage at twenty, there is implicit a faith intuitive and fitting to the artist. These lines cannot have been written many blocks away from Main Street—yet what a difference those few blocks make!

Across our bed the shaded lamplight flows
And falls, a yellow silence, over you,
Over pillow and tufted quilt of blue;
And all your beauty perfect in repose
Lies here insentient, careless that I keep
My eyes upon you in a warm caress.
This is the purity of loveliness
Unused and unembarrassed. This is sleep. . . .

. . . all I know is this,
This body that withholds you like a gown,
This mask across the smile beneath your frown,
All that my arms have clasped, my mouth has kissed. . . .

And like a gentle wind the darkness blows
Out of the shoreless sea where stars careen
As bright and blind as ours, and worlds unseen
Grow tired like ours and seek at last repose.
To each my brother there that dims his light
And gazes for a little on the sky,
Silent for love and beauty, ere he lie
By his love's side to sleep; good night, good night!

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About 1922 Cline secured a reporting job on the Baltimore *Sun*, to which he was helped by H. L. Mencken. The story of the Ku Klux Klan murders in Louisiana which he wrote for that paper won a Pulitzer prize, and his name began to appear as contributor in the *New Republic* and the *Nation*. In 1923 he was writing me from New York, inviting me to a twelve o'clock breakfast: "I arrived a fortnight since, in a nimbus of baleful disapproval, under rather interesting circumstances. I'm on the *World* . . . fiscally my status is very uncertain. But as for life—if you are half as well pleased as I, you are happy indeed". The reference was to the *capriccio* of his personal affairs. It was at this time that he collaborated on the play, *Daisies Won't Tell,* in which Pauline Lord appeared briefly. In 1924 he was in St. Louis, as literary editor for the *Post-Dispatch*. My recollection of the clippings which he sent me week by week of his column, "If This Be Treason—", is of sound criticism and scintillating fancy.

The apex of Cline's career was the publication of *God Head* in 1924. The book was brilliantly received. He gave up the journalistic grind and settled down to his own work. The second novel, *Listen, Moon!* was a *succès d'estime,* written in a very different manner, half-boyish foolery, half-drunken ecstasy. The third, *The Dark Chamber*, reverted to the mood of *God Head*. The action passes on ground that any of us might have walked yesterday, the Jersey Palisades. In those woods you or I might have seen just such a house suggestive of antique decay, and just such a monstrous police dog might have made our backbones crawl with his stare. But surely the house would never have been called Mordance Hall, nor the dog have answered to the sinister German name of Tod. In such lapses Cline touches bottom, and instead of being horrified one snickers. There are, however, passages of genuine beauty in *The Dark Chamber*. The younger of the two heroines, accomplished in light love, is a touching portrait. I cannot believe that the feet on which she walks away to a happy ending are substantial enough to crush a grass-blade, but the earlier scene of her return to her home is painful and plausible, and there is the colour of truth, too, in the sunny spring world that surrounds the mildewed house. *The Dark Chamber* has moments of the best, although it leaves *God Head* unchallenged as a sustained composition. *God Head* is, so far as I know, a unique performance; its spiritual climate should have been viable to Poe or Melville; yet it is as modern and as real as a steam-engine or a hospital or a logging-camp.

In March 1927, Cline wrote me: "The Vikings are bringing out a translation of mine, Thomas Raucat's *L'Honorable Partie de Campagne*, in May and a third novel, *The Dark Chamber*, in August. I'm just midway in the revision of the latter now, and will follow it with a whimsy somewhat in the vein of *Listen, Moon!* . . . I have notes on hand right now for eight more novels—so you see production plans are ample. . . .

"Sometime think of me again, and think of Chicory Hill, and come to visit Mrs. Cline [Katherine Gridley] and myself, won't you? Fate was kind to us for two weeks last fall, and we are mistress and master of a house two centuries old and eighty acres around it, of woods and rocky meadows, with a trout brook and cascades and swimming pool, and an elegant one-ton truck named Capiooo, and an apple orchard, and all. We are eight miles from Willimantic, up a lost road—the Wormwood Hill road—between the hamlet of Bedlam and the village of Jerusalem. You would enjoy it tremendously."

When next I heard of him it was June and I was in London, reading the front-page accounts of his crime. In the following spring, while he was in jail, I asked him to criticize some verses of my own. He responded with the copy of *After-Walker* which I have mentioned, and wrote, "Perhaps it should be published like St. John of the Cross, with a chapter of exegesis for every stanza". From the letters which followed I choose some para-

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graphs which illumine Leonard Cline's art and his personality.

"I ought to be working—and if I can't write pseudonymous trash for pay, which this month apparently I can't, I ought to be getting busy on the next actual book, which will be in the *God Head-The Dark Chamber* line—but I don't want to work. It's enormously hard now, with the end of this thing so near.

"Yesterday I got into Hulme* and rejoiced all morning, rejoiced all afternoon; and burst into oaths at about four o'clock. At the end, precisely, of the essay on Romanticism, where trying for once to define himself, he goes completely to pot. Yes, his remarks on poetry. I have already packed the book away and can't quote precisely. But here he has certain very fine ideas, very good to me—ideas you will find in *After-Walker*, by the way—and then he is unable to carry them out.

"Some day perhaps we'll have some categories better than classic and romantic in which to group our poetry. Classic and romantic have been so misused that they have now no sharp distinction; no objective distinction at all. They mean no more than 'a' and 'b.' Maybe we'll define our poetry by the hormone most actively secreted during the writing of it: thyroxin, pituitrin, adrenalin—there you have three distinct classes. Keats, Matthew Arnold and Kipling, perhaps.

"But when Hulme tries to distinguish his predicted (and surely imminent) neo-classicism by its quality of 'zest' in the 'description' of something, without the necessity of solemnity, and recognizing the finite in the face of the divine boundlessness—why, all he is doing is describe good poetry of either romantic or classic type.

"Now, Valle-Inclán† foresees both the need and the imminence of the same thing. His reasoning is commended by the fact that his sentences are well articulated, demonstrating better than anything else his soundness. When a man loses himself in a tangle of clauses and can't get back to his main sentence, as Hulme does, he shows himself a slipshod thinker. Valle-Inclán, calling upon our poets to behead their swans, says all that Hulme has said, and, what is more, sweeps the *Collected Poetical Works* of Hulme out of the corner into the fire. What an absurd gesture those *Collected Poetical Works** are! . . .

"Sincerity is necessary [to the artist], of course; that is romanticism. But I do think it must be based on a certain severity of life *in relation to* one's art; and that is classic. You may chuckle over the last sentence, remembering what you may have heard about me; but I assure you that the mortifications I impose on myself as poet are probably equivalent to those which, imposed on himself as confessor, made St. Leonard of Noblac a man for a mass. The hair-shirt is different, that's all. And in addition to sincerity and austerities, you must have intelligence. Schopenhauer is a splendid example of a man with sincerity and austerities and no intelligence. . . .

"A pig and an eagle can see the same apple. Hulme saw it but can't get out of his sty. Twenty years from now, in retrospect, I may know whether I'm pig or eagle. But a man never knows whether it's hoof or pinion that sprouts from his shoulder till, catching his breath and screwing up his courage, he flaps it and quits the earth.

"What about responsiveness? Qualitative and quantitative. Probably the most uncertain and the most important factor in a writer.

"Well, I see I'm fairly started on a letter, and I might as well go on. Without trying to prove anything, here are some things which seem to me evident. How would you place me, by these, in terms of romantic or classic?

* *Speculations*, by T. E. Hulme, a young Englishman who was killed in the war.

† Ramón del Valle-Inclán, the Spanish novelist, is known to American readers chiefly for his *Pleasant Memoirs of the Marquis of Bradomin*. During his imprisonment Cline translated Valle-Inclán's *La Lampara Maravilosa*, a volume of esthetics.

*Five brief imagist poems appended to *Speculations*.

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". . . [*sic*]

"I have just spent a half hour collecting my wits. Please understand why. Every now and then one gets an appeal from somebody to look at his book. Most people who send theirs to me never answer my letters thereafter; although God knows I say nothing to them that I wouldn't to myself. Also Hulme, whom you sent me, irritates me into an effort to define myself. All that follows we will consider in the light of Valle-Inclán's apocalyptic roar, waking out of a nap on a sofa in the café where he was accustomed to drink and smoke hashish: 'Yes, the poet *has* to be an absurd fellow!'

"(1) God, etc. There is an actuality in relation to which the universe we are conscious of has an existence, all beyond human perception and consequently conception, and thus in inconceivable terms. Occasionally metaphors give us the shadow of that actuality; and metaphor therefore is the only possible approach to the noumenal. In Roman Catholic dogma and doctrine I find the richest and most satisfying collection of such metaphors; therefore I am a Roman Catholic.

"There is a world of chickens limited by wire. It lies midway between a world of lice, in which the individual chickens would figure somewhat as circulating continents; and a world of men, in which the chickens figure as a taxable property of trivial value, in the category of victual. The figure can be carried farther. However the attitude of the louse toward the chicken, the chicken toward the man, is roughly comparable with the attitude of man toward the noumenal.

"(2) Dogma. Hulme is right when he says few, even inside the Church, understand dogma. The Church is necessarily provided with a *means of continuous revelation* in the office of the Pope. Dogma consequently is fluid: fixed in its intent, varying in the degree of clarity with which that intent is made manifest.

"(3) The Good is absolute. It would be such conduct in our universe as best accords with our relationship to the noumenal, and thus can hardly be profoundly known. As Hulme says, it is apprehended by man, but (as he fails to specify) variously by different men. The Decalogue indicates general aspects. Thus certain *restraints* and likewise certain *fulfillments* are imposed on men. Sin is the degree by which all human effort must fall short, either in the matter of restraint or that of fulfillment, of the apprehended Perfection.

"The problem of sin without responsibility has been interestingly treated. I'm not able to explain it adequately.

"(4) Likewise the Beautiful is absolute, and apprehended but dimly by man. Let us distinguish between the Beautiful (which lies roughly in the category of extent) and the Good (in that of Time).

"(5) Sex. The ideal of man and woman, complementary in intellectual as well as physical terms, united in the most vital of all possible experiences, mutually satisfactory and therefore single-hearted, with the desire of creation enveloping the embrace from which creation proceeds, is felt to be a glimpse of perfection. Catholic dogma makes this the type of the relationship between God and man; a doctrine interestingly capable of analogy in the field of science.

"(6) The Poet. Prepared by some knowledge of natural and theological science, gifted by quick emotional response and lively imagination (in whatever psychological terms you choose to explain these things), he it is who more often than not finds the new metaphor and puts it in circulation. He cashes the check presented on the one hand by Thomas Aquinas and on the other by Newton. He builds what dogma later will describe.

"In this connection laziness, insincerity, etc., etc., become cardinal sins for the poet.—Ignorance, log-rolling, jealousy, an ear to praise.

"(7) I am just as sure of a superior order of existence as any chicken should be that men build internal-combustion engines, copu-

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late anteriorly, write poetry and mint dollars. I do say prayers, and I may some day tell you a certain prayer that I say as a poet; and as to prayers I am quite satisfied that there is no ear (pinna, tympanum, labyrinth and all) cocked in ghostly concern at my *prie-Dieu*.

"Within the general limitations of these beliefs I go my way, far too impulsive, sinning often and very sorry for it, amorous, proud, angry, lazy, presumptuous; with a great love for life and a great tenderness toward every living thing, and a great joy, and not much sentimentalism; with a conviction that I too may find a metaphor worth keeping, if I never am satisfied.

"'*Tamen quia occulta Dei ratio insedet in universis, ob tenuem illam similitudinem conati sunt theologi omnium nominibus illum significare. . . . Non solum nomine solis, coeli, lucis, vitae, intellectus, mentis, vel si quid hujusmodi sit melius; sed etiam volucrum et quadrupedum et plantarum, lapidum et elementorum et reptilium, divina dicuntur.*'"

("Yet since the hidden knowledge of God inheres in all things everywhere, because of that slight kinship the theologians have tried designating Him by the names of all things. —Not only under the name of the sun, sky, light, life, intellect, mind, or whatever you choose of this kind that may be better; but even of birds and beasts and plants, stocks and stones and creeping things, divine attributes are predicated.")

"As for *After-Walker*, I rather anticipated your feeling of bemusement. Really, I didn't try to be obscure; nor in anything I write do I sweat over phrases. In this particular poem the fundamental metaphor . . . is as old as Alexandria and as new as Paul Claudel; and the experience that I celebrate is simply conversion in the most profound sense. The five people who have understood the poem include one Jesuit, a professor likewise of poetry; a man who has strong inclinations toward the Trappist order; a youth whose patron saint is John of the Cross; and two women who have gone through violent upheavals. Conversions; not, necessarily, to the Church."

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ESSAYS IN GRAMMAR

IV. THE VILLAIN PRONOUN

by Janet Rankin Aiken

No other one of the eight traditional parts of speech causes so many groans and heartburnings as does the pronoun. The pronoun is shifty, slippery, vague, and frequently downright vicious. If I were casting the eight parts of speech in a play, the villain's rôle would go to this one. It is not merely that the term pronoun itself leads straight to confusion; the application of the term also causes endless inconsistency and difficulty.

First let us examine the term pronoun, in its usual definition of noun-substitute. From the functional aspect the pronoun is no different from a noun; it is a noun, and not a substitute. It is subject or complement, just as the noun is. Why should we separate pronouns from nouns, when functionally they are the same? If we have pro-nouns, why not pro-verbs, pro-adjectives, and pro-adverbs? If a pro-noun stands for a noun as *he* stands for *John* in *John promised he would be there*, so are there words which stand for verbs, such as *did* in *he went and so did I*, words which stand for adjectives, as *the same* in *I am lazy and you are the same*, and words which stand for adverbs, as *so* in *I walked quickly but she less so*. All these are word-substitutes, pro-words, and might reasonably be named accordingly.

True, there are more noun-substitutes than verb, adjective, or adverb substitutes, and this fact might seem to justify making a special pronoun group. But the pronoun group in itself is by no means clear. Nearly any noun may stand for another noun, as *book* for *Ivanhoe* or *man* for *Herbert Hoover*. According to the definition of pronoun the word *thing* in practically every one of its uses is a pronoun, since it nearly always stands for something more specific than itself. Indeed, *something* and *anything* are actually classed as pronouns, although they do not definitely stand for another noun idea nearly so clearly as does *thing* itself, a word always called noun and never, to my knowledge, pronoun. *Something* and *anything* can scarcely be called noun-substitutes as can *thing*.

And neither are the pronouns *none* and *nothing* substitutes for any noun. And as for *I*, one might more truly say that in conversation the use of the individual name would be a substitute for the pronoun, than the other way around. The use of any word but *I* or *me* for the individual speaking of himself is so rare that it cannot reasonably be made the normal or standard plan, with *I* and *me* the substitutes. These pronouns are not properly of pronoun character. Evidently we recognize pronouns not so much by the word of the text-book as by some inner light, some grammatical intuition or instinct possessed by the fortunate among us.

These objections to the pronoun definition and delimitation are not my own invention.

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You will find most of them stated in Jespersen's *Philosophy of Grammar*, a book very unsettling to the upholder of conventional grammatical doctrine. And of course they become obvious facts when we begin thinking about grammatical ideas rather than merely learning grammatical rules.

If we try to find some real distinction between noun and pronoun and to conform our thinking to this real distinction, we shall find that there are six words which set themselves definitely apart from the noun type. These are *I, we, he, she, they,* and *who.* Their distinction is that they alone of English words have separate forms according as their use is that of subject or object. These six subject forms, together with their object forms *me, us, him, her, them,* and *whom*, are words which present special difficulties even to the native speaker of English, and which therefore must be studied and handled differently from other words in the noun function.

It might have been (*I, me*).

I expected it to be (*she, her*).

(*Who, Whom*) do you think he was looking for?

(*Who, Whom*) would you guess he was?

Such choices as these trick native speakers as often as they do foreigners. The Bible, that well of English not quite always undefiled, makes Jesus say "Whom say ye that I am?" thereby violating a sacred rule of the modern conservative grammarian, or else giving aid and comfort to the radicals. Instances from other reputable writings in English, from Shakespeare to Mark Twain, are abundant. It may be said broadly that no English-speaking person knows how to use *who* and *whom*, *I* and *me*, *he* and *him*, in rapid or unguarded speech.

Confusion has become worse confounded by the fact that modern grammarians may be found to condone—nay, even to justify—the Biblical use of the accusative after *am.* In England, rumour has told me, this pretty situation has arisen. If in writing an examination paper you call "it's me" correct, you are marked wrong. If, on the other hand, you say this locution is "justified by usage", you are given a perfect grade. Here the College Entrance Examination Board has gone over to the radical side and refuses to call "it's me" wrong at all.

My own practice in the matter is far from logical. If a student writes "It's I", I pass the matter over in silence. If on the other hand he writes "It's me", then I explain to him that he may or may not follow the conservative practice, as he likes. H. E. Palmer, in his *Grammar of Spoken English*, betrays what he thinks of "It's I" in his statement: "In careful and deliberate speech, especially between strangers and women-folk, when one is on one's guard against possible criticism, the forms *I, he, she, we,* and *they* are generally heard. Those who have cultivated a bookish or formal style of speaking almost invariably use this form. It therefore follows that the unfortunate student, whichever form he uses, will be corrected and warned against that particular form".

To sum up the matter, as a teacher of grammar said to me, "If we can't stand on the use of *I* with *am* or *is*, where in grammar can we stand, anyway?" Well—where can we?

The classifications of pronouns present more difficulties. There are first the groupings into personal, indefinite, and so on. These I would simply eliminate, leaving only six words in the pronoun group. And then there are the three formidable terms demonstrative, relative, and interrogative. Demonstrative, relative, and interrogative pronouns are things which certainly I, and possibly you, do not fully understand.

The demonstratives—*this* and *that, these* and *those*—would be simple were it not that these words are sometimes adjectives and sometimes nouns. And since any English word may be found in more than one use, this is not a large difficulty. Once we grasp the principle of functional shift—noun to

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adjective, adverb to preposition, and so on—it becomes easy to follow English words about among the various part-of-speech categories.

The line between interrogative and relative pronouns is far less clear. Thus *what* is interrogative in *what do you want*? and relative in *do you know what you want*? *Which* and *who* are subject to the same puzzling shifts. Indeed, *which* and *what* may be adjectives as well as nouns, as in *do you know what book you want*?

In my own (unproduced) grammatical drama the villain is absent. There are no pronouns. The difficult forms *I* and *me*, *he* and *him*, et cetera, are treated as case-survivals. Otherwise we have simply nouns, adjectives, noun-connectives, and adjective-connectives, to cover the present pronoun types. The demonstrative is a noun or an adjective. The interrogative is a noun or an adjective. The relative is a noun-connective or an adjective-connective.

The last notion is the only one requiring explanation. Take the sentence *John is the boy who spoke*. Here *who* is a noun, being the subject of *spoke*. It is also a connective, since it joins the clause *who spoke* to the main sentence. In the sentence *he knew what he wanted*, *what* again connects a clause to the main sentence; it is also a noun, the object of *wanted*. Why import the term pronoun to obscure a construction adequately explained without the use of this term?

It is an odd instance of grammarian inconsistency that when an adverb takes on a connective function (as *when* does in *I wonder when she'll come*), the word *when* is then called a connective; but when a pronoun connects, it is still called a (relative) pronoun.

But next you may ask, what about antecedents? We were taught in school always to be sure that a pronoun had an antecedent. How is this matter to be taught if we merge pronouns with nouns?

In the first place, it is not true to say that a pronoun always must, should, or even can have an antecedent. Dozens of these words —*whoever*, *anyone*, *none*, *they*, *I*, even *who* and *he*—may be used correctly without any antecedent whatever. What is the antecedent of *he* in *he who hesitates is lost*, or of *who* in *who strives succeeds*? What is the antecedent of *I* in any of its uses?

And in the second place, it is often just as important that a noun have an antecedent as that a pronoun have one; and the absence of the antecedent leads to ambiguity just as surely. For example: *On the table lay "David Copperfield", "Macbeth", and "Rob Roy"; I picked up the book and began to read.* The sentence is ambiguous because we do not know the antecedent of the noun *book*.

So I should formulate the rule about antecedents in more general terms, something like this: whenever an element in a sentence refers to another sentence element, the reference must be made unmistakably clear. Of course the examples would be mainly what are called pronoun examples, but not entirely so.

To sum up, it seems to me that the pronoun is a source of confusion rather than of enlightenment in modern English grammar, and that it can be replaced, and should be replaced, by other concepts already present in this study. The trick would not be hard to do, and I believe the result would be a grammatical system far truer to the actual facts of present-day English.

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A MONTH OF THE THEATRE

THE OLD AND THE NEW

by Francis Fergusson

THE second in the series of English classics at the New School for Social Research was Ben Jonson's study of his contemporary spellbinder, *The Alchemist*—an excellent choice. The performance was auspicious: the Fortune Players, who acted it, had plenty of gusto; the audience, as soon as it began to understand the language, was amused; and the cautious second-line reviewers from the newspapers generously conceded that for an old play it was not so bad. Since it is through them that theatregoers find out about the performance, it is too bad they didn't know what to expect; did not know, for instance, that if the speeches were long it was not so much because Jonson didn't understand snappy dialogue, as because he had more to say about his Londoners than Moss Hart, for example, has to say about Hollywood. It should be stated that, although the situations in this play are handled with the utmost skill, maintaining suspense at every moment, still the situations themselves are not the point, as they are in a Broadway farce, but rather a device for revealing the deeper humour of character. Consider that Jonson's language serves not only to convey the necessary information and tell the story, but also to establish and define the peculiar light in which he sees humanity—that the language, in other words, is part of the show, and a more important part than costume, setting, and perhaps even performance. Jonson's name for his Puritanical Pastor of Amsterdam, Tribulation Wholesome, alone suggests more about the essence of Puritanism than many a contemporary volume on the subject.

The Fortune Players seemed grateful for a chance to play such tremendous caricatures, in such brilliantly theatrical situations; and they succeeded in giving the audience some of their delight. The small auditorium and flat stage, at the New School, bring the audience and actors closer together than the typical Broadway stage, and so avoid some of the deadening effects of cut-and-dried "professionalism". The performances of Maurice Cass as the Alchemist, J. W. Austin as Face, Edgar Kent as Drugger and Viola Roach as Dol Common, were much better than could have been hoped.

Even if it is impossible to make Jonson "go" for a commercial run—and I am not sure that it is—these performances at the New School more than justify themselves. A classic is the best comment on the contemporary stage.

The Third Little Show

The first big musical of the warm weather to threaten to make a hit, is built around Beatrice Lillie, Carl Randall, Ernest Truex, and a very well-drilled and snappy chorus under Dave Gould. It is very uneven: Miss Lillie, who knows how to be funny without

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seeming to try, livens things up whenever she appears. She must understand what it is about herself that makes the audience laugh—a sort of British straight-faced solemn bumptiousness and elegant self-assertiveness which she has patented—and in each of her numbers she unerringly hits the nail on the head. Mr. Truex, on the other hand, never knows when they're going to laugh, and so is always straining pitiably to please. They gave him that heart-rending number without which no revue is complete: the number in which the leading man, with the spot on him, strolls down to the proscenium, ominously eyeing the baldheaded row, and sings (sadly, at first, with the violins, and at last tragically, with the drums and brasses, clasping his hands and writhing) about the evil life of jazz and gin, or the hopelessness of unrequited love. The name of that number in this show is "Going, Going, Gone!", and Mr. Truex makes it rather flat. Mr. Randall is far better; an excellent dancer, versatile, humorous, and neat. He danced one number with Gertrude MacDonald called "le Five o'Clock", which was reminiscent of *Petrouchka* and *Le Chat*. The disconcerting thing about these revues is that their best numbers usually have a long genealogy. The most illustrious ancestor is likely to be the Diaghileff Ballet, the *Chauve Souris*, or the Swedish Ballet. What will happen to our show business when these sources are at last dried up? When Broadway has completed the vulgarization of the European stage, and Hollywood has completely diluted Broadway? Even Miss Lillie, who has plenty of originality, turned for material to a take-off, very sharp and good, of Ruth Draper's "On the Western Plains". There they are, the skilful and talented revue stars, the best stage artists we have, all dressed up and no place to go. Which reminds me that our designers, who do the dressing up, are often more original than anyone else. The settings by Jo Mielziner were excellent, and the costumes by Raymond Sovey good.

Precedent

One of the more exciting plays still current at this writing, moved to Broadway from the Village. It is a "social drama" by I. J. Golden, based on the facts of the Mooney-Billings case. The story, which appears to be well authenticated, is that of a labour leader, who, about the time of our entrance into the war, was conducting a railroad strike. At about the same time there was a bomb-explosion in a preparedness parade that killed several people, and the labour leader was framed as the bomb-thrower. It was subsequently proved that he was not guilty, as we are informed on the program: but the powers that got him sent to prison have managed to keep him there ever since.

It is impossible to see this play without being appalled at the injustice, not to say the murder, which it reveals. But the producers make the mistake of putting a pretentious note in the program claiming "The Greek Dramatists", and, with better reason, Galsworthy, as Mr. Golden's predecessors in "social drama". *Precedent* is not only splendid propaganda, it is an exciting play, and contains some of the best simple stage English, some of the most dramatic arguing, that has been heard recently on our stage. Moreover, the characters are entirely convincing. This should be enough for any play, without confusing the issue about what makes really great drama, or trying to imply that the only serious themes are "social", whatever that may mean.

Precedent is one of the best-acted plays of the season. Mr. Walter Hart, hitherto unknown, was the director.

The Band Wagon

This revue was preceded by such an ecstatic réclame, and heralded by such extremely enthusiastic notices from Philadelphia, where it was first tried out, that there is no wonder it was a little disappointing. George

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S. Kaufman and Howard Dietz are a reassuring team, but the material they found or invented was hardly up to the performers. Frank Morgan and Helen Broderick are first-class actors and entertainers; the Astaires are skilful dancers and comedians; and Tilly Losch, in the Mary Wigman school, would be excellent if only she were not so gymnastic at one moment and so intoxicated with "beauty" the next. The opening number is a take-off on all revues—the lyrics with roses and limelight, the chorus that prances, and the tap-dancing funnyman. The revue proper that follows uses all these devices, familiar enough under their fashionable airs and graces. If the net result is unmistakably one of the better revues, it is because Frank Morgan for one keeps it in countenance, and because the settings by Albert Johnson and the costumes by Kiviette and Constance Ripley are very high-class. There are two choruses, one black and gray, one pink and white, which Albertina Rasch and the designers managed to make strikingly good. There is a revolving stage which Mr. Johnson uses to great advantage; but here again it seems that glorious opportunities were missed. *The Band Wagon* is such an excellent idea for a general satire of New York and our times, that one would have liked to see it passing before our eyes, and find out once for all what kind of a wagon it may be that makes people try so hard to keep up with the Joneses.

Two Movies

Tabu, the work of Murnau and Flaherty, is a refreshing film, as films go, more on account of the South Seas atmosphere, for which I take it Flaherty was responsible, than because of the sickly movie love-story which was probably the contribution of Murnau, the director. *Tabu* has nothing to do with the tribal religion and customs of the South Seas. But it contains pictures of such alluring volcanic islands against cloudy skies, such talcum powder beaches in the sunshine, such graceful palm trees and magnificent surf, and above all, portraits of such innocently smiling girls and boys, that it almost persuades us to believe in the *Paradiso Terrestre* that those Islands are supposed to have been before the white men came. Once you renounce all hope of getting an insight into the lives of the natives, and grant the director his chocolate-syrup story, you recognize some good touches in the staging. The chosen one, the girl under tabu, is pushed out to sea in a canoe covered with leaves, to the accompaniment of a chorus of women's voices; the man, trying to rescue her from a life of holy virginity, is drowned, at the end of the film, swimming after a sailboat that carries her away, and his exhaustion and loss in the waves are very well shown from the dipping stern of the boat.

The film industry, in its frantic work of exploiting the creations of other people for its own economico-democratic purposes, ranges from Papeete to the French tradition of comedy. If René Clair's new show, *Le Million,* is better than most Hollywood comedies, it is because he is still supported by the Molière formula, which is far better theatre than our own funny-paper slapsticks. *Le Million* is the story of a young man who wins a lottery, and loses his winning ticket, which everyone in Paris then tries to steal. By chopping this film into a series of neatly built scenes; but putting it all in a snappy rhythm, like a quick march, and setting part of it to music; and by using his settings like the traditional French stage with three doors, out of which angry people are always popping, René Clair shows that he is simply transferring the old comedy to the screen. In this he is successful within the limitations of his scenario. It is a relief to meet unsentimental juveniles, treated as part of the whole satire. Our Hollywood film-makers never manage to make their young things as human as this, perhaps because they are farther geographically and culturally from the source of classical comedy.

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FICTION

FATHER MALACHY'S MIRACLE *by Bruce Marshall* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

Now and then, but very seldom, a story is published which is immaculately free from the curse of fiction—obviousness. When this happens, critics are at a disadvantage because they have no safe ground of comparison on which to base their criticism. Mr. Marshall's book is one of these unholy originals. In the first place a miracle—a bona fide miracle—is, as the author admits, out of date; and in the second place the particular miracle which gives its name to the tale is of a whimsical character, and has side issues which are broadly comic, and out of keeping in a miraculous atmosphere. Yet no intelligent and unprejudiced reader (there must be some such in a murky world) can deny, or will want to deny, the supremely spiritual urge which brings this marvel into being. In a pitiless setting of broad-church ecclesiasticism nervously apologizing for God, and of coarse and flabby materialism which would weigh down the wings of a seraph, Father Malachy, Benedictine monk and past master of Gregorian chant, is as much out of place as it is possible for a human being to be in a presumably human society.

Mr. Marshall knows the people of whom he writes. He knows the manager of the Garden of Eden dance hall, and the manager of the "Whose Baby Are You?" company, and the more ambitious showman who produces Handel's *Messiah* in Birmingham, and "Get Me Girlie" at the West End. He draws these worthies with a sure and an unkind touch. He knows the sort of women such men take to wife, the dinners they give, the posters they find stimulating to business: "a girl lying on a sofa, in what a Nordic artist imagined a Nordic public would interpret as a state of abandon". He knows too the Roman Catholic hierarchy from the capable, ordinary-minded bishop, the kind of man who leaves behind him a trail of perverted architecture and agonizing murals, to the raw priestlets, "ecclesiastical knockabouts", who have been taught Latin but no English, ritual but no manners, and who are being hammered into shape by an austere and scholarly canon with a perfected knowledge of Gothic vestments. And in their midst Father Malachy, wise with the wisdom of the saints, looking simply and bravely into the tangle of life, and seeing it straightened out by the power and the purpose of God.

And why, we wonder, should a book so sweetly serious and so irresistibly gay be disfigured here and there by little laboured grossnesses that mar both its seriousness and its gaiety! The worst that can be said of them is that they are in bad taste; but taste has been called the guardian of our minor morals, and there are fastidious souls who set an especial value on minor morals because they are innately pleasing. Modernists keep reminding us that dirt is, after all, just dirt, and as much a part of the natural order as cleanness. There are those who prefer this form of naturalness, who are persistent in its cultivation, and loud in its defense. It has a whole school of its own. But the little blemishes that deface Mr. Marshall's pages are no more than fly-specks on a shining surface. A careless reader would be barely aware of their existence. The annoyance of the discriminating reader must needs be in proportion to his relish for the beauty and the fun of the book.

AGNES REPPLIER

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MANY THOUSANDS GONE *by John Peale Bishop* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.50)

As ANOTHER effort to build literature on and around the Civil War, Mr. Bishop's collection of five stories is distinguished by an exceptional vividness of detail, a fairly consistent detachment, and a groping for an appropriate technique. None of these stories is without merit, two of them at least are distinct additions to the genre in this country, but all of them suffer from their author's essential uncertainty of attitude toward his subject. Indeed they illustrate just how far one may go in the treatment of a subject without a clearly defined theme.

No book in recent years approaches the era with the same sure sense of intimate detail. The huge canvas is depicted with a casual economy of line that produces an effect of far greater completeness than was ever attained by the School of Dixon and Churchill. Eschewing the libraries, Mr. Bishop has relied on the garrulous reminiscences of his elders, like the old man who is made to tell the gruesome tale of *The Cellar*. The result is a wealth of just those petty but extremely significant impressions of a lost time which history ignores and a later imagination fails to supply.

This keen focusing on detail is moreover a function of Mr. Bishop's style and, in one instance, of his method as well. At present Mr. Bishop's style suggests a compromise between the compact statement of Ernest Hemingway and the freer colloquial rhythms of Katherine Mansfield and Mrs. Woolf. (Mr. Bishop is rather too much under these latter influences, one feels, for a sensibility as masculine as his appears to be from the choice of subjects.) This style is just right for conveying the evasive irrelevancies of the young girl's mind in *Young Death and Desire*, but in the final story the kittenish tone is a handicap to sincerity.

Detail is in fact the sole unit of composition in the title-story, *Many Thousands Gone*. The occupation of a small Southern town by Northern troops is projected by a series of fragmentary actions, which are separately developed but drawn together only in the sense that the dominant emotion has gained a certain momentum toward the end. The *unanimiste* technique is well used as a literary device but it is not properly identified with an idea or any principle of meaning throughout. Much superior is the story called *Young Death and Desire* in which Mr. Bishop's talents for detail and elliptical development correspond exactly to the subject. A Southern girl of good family watches over a dying boy in her kitchen with another young soldier who has come to bury him. The horror of the situation throws them together in a swiftly reckless protest against the atmosphere of death around them.

These stories are related only through their common background; they do not approximate the unity of a novel. But Mr. Bishop has almost all the gifts required of a good novelist. His limitations at present derive from his rather too facile susceptibility to influence and his inability to adjust his moral imagination to the scope of his material.

WILLIAM TROY

THE BLIND MAN *by Olav Duun* (KNOPF. $2.50)

THIS novel is the second volume of *The People of Juvik*, the six volumes of which, to be issued regularly in translation, comprise Duun's Norwegian saga of the nineteenth century. The saga recounts the lives of several generations of peasants living isolated from the outer world on a fiord. They have the barbaric virtues of endurance and hardihood, the barbaric weaknesses of ignorance, narrowness, and superstition. The treatment, though naturalistic, has touches of mirth, and an emphasis on strong characters who possess a certain epic dignity. Whether any unifying theme will emerge before the end is not yet apparent; at present all that is dis-

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closed is a series of life chronicles unrelated to each other except by setting and genealogy. It seems probable that the author is being groomed for the Nobel prize. Under the circumstances he comes inevitably into comparison with Hamsun and Sigrid Undset, and—at least on the present evidence, and to a foreigner—to his disadvantage. Briefly, he lacks compelling power. In *The Blind Man* there is one full-length characterization in Anders, the hero; and a second nearly as complete in his brother Petter. But in treating these men the author's method is habitually sketchy rather than thorough-going; he seems intelligent rather than emotionally and imaginatively profound; and as a result the crucial events of the story fail to move us. The events are furthermore far too commonplace, and are not justified by any apparent significance. The saga is conscientious and interesting, but no masterpiece. That fact, of course, will not necessarily prevent Duun's winning the Nobel Prize.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

DEEP EVENING *by Eugene Löhrke* (CAPE & SMITH. $2.00)

ASIDE from its mawkish title, *Deep Evening* makes a uniform impression of sincerity, good workmanship, and sanity throughout. Its characters are passengers and a few members of the crew of the liner *Glamourland*, and they are presented to us at a vivid moment of their lives, the moment in which death threatens all of them. In the three hours between the lookout's assumption of his watch and his plunge from the mast, their lives and characteristics are brought before us with keen insight, a sympathy which forces its way through the objective, vigorous style, and with fine dramatic skill. A feeling of apprehension is produced at the very first, and this dread of the impending catastrophe filters through incident after incident until it becomes a certainty of disaster. The author has not yielded to the temptation to wring the last drop of effect from his material; he has preferred to understate, if anything, but he has achieved really fine effects with his sober method. Mr. Löhrke is here a futilitarian, and few people will be grieved at the deaths of such characters as Giuseppe, the steward, whose name, by the way, is obstinately misspelled Guiseppe, or Mr. Barton, of Wall Street; likewise, few will rejoice at the escape of the others, for whom death would have been kinder. *Deep Evening* does no more than present the question, leaving the reader to solve it for himself; this was the case with its prototype, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, and the attraction in both books is the opportunity offered the reader for pronouncing judgment and feeling pity, from his own secure point of vantage, for the tangled lives of others. Mr. Löhrke has succeeded in making his offer acceptable.

ROBERT MOLLOY

THE ROAD BACK *by Erich Maria Remarque* (LITTLE, BROWN. $2.50)

THE character of Remarque's achievement is no longer in doubt. He has created another book worthy to set beside his first. *The Road Back* lacks something of the force and direction, even something of the cruelty, of *All Quiet on the Western Front*. It will evoke in the reader a feeling of pity rather than of horror. But the view of life which it contains is broader and mellower, and more inclusive. Remarque has encompassed in this volume, not the problem of a single man, but the problem of a generation. His prose, suitable as it was before, has become an infinitely stronger and more supple medium, and Mr. A. W. Wheen has cast it into admirable English.

Ernst, the protagonist of this story, is young and sensitive. He had gone straight from school to the trenches, and war was the only life with which he was familiar. He greeted the Armistice joyfully, but with

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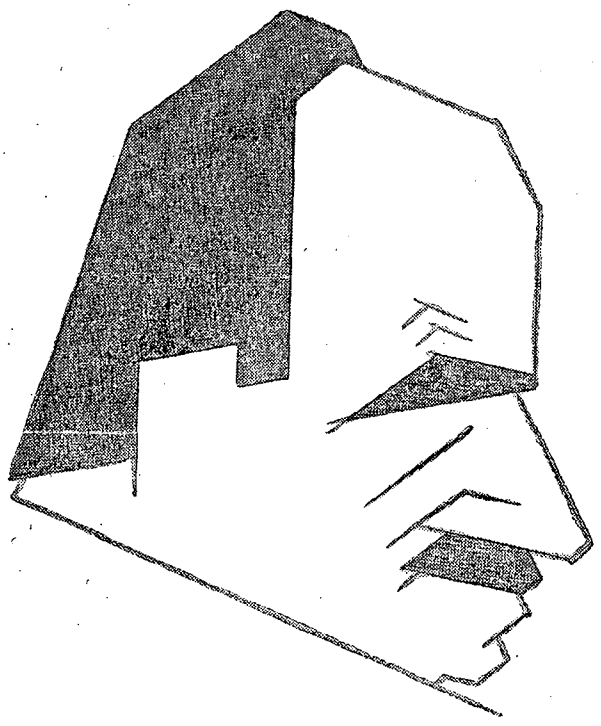

JAKOB WASSERMANN

Caricature by Eva Herrmann

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a sense of bewilderment that this life which had become so much a part of him was finished. At home he finds himself separated from civilian life by a barrier he cannot explain. So uncomfortable is he on his first night in the clean little room where he had slept as a boy that he slinks out, evading his parents with a flimsy excuse, to find someone to play a game of skat.

The kindliness, the faith, the security of the life he remembered had mysteriously vanished. Brave men in thousands had died, and here at home people went on lying and cheating, scrambling greedily for money, and mouthing pompous, empty phrases, as if the war had never been. Between men united by the imminence of death there had been a warm, firm comradeship. The resumption of civilian clothes had erected the old barriers, between this man who was a cobbler, and that one who was the son of an income-tax inspector. As for love, there was little of its beauty and mystery left for a boy who had first made its acquaintance in a front-line brothel. Nothing life at home offers Ernst seems in the least worth having.

Other men, less intelligent or less sensitive than Ernst, found the readjustment easier. Ledderhose opened a chain of grog-shops and began to amass a fortune. Willy contented himself with eating and drinking and brawling and making love. Muckenhaupt joined a rifle club and discoursed reminiscently of his life in the army. Still others, less tenacious of life than Ernst, fell an easy prey to destruction. Giesecke went insane, still imagining himself pinned beneath the body of a mutilated Englishman. Rahe reenlisted in the army. Trosske, accustomed after years in the trenches to hold life lightly, murdered his unfaithful sweetheart.

One feels the waste and destruction of war as bitterly here as in *All Quiet on the Western Front*. But the world goes on, and already there is a new generation which knows nothing of war. As for Ernst, painfully and in the midst of desolation, he is struggling toward peace of a sort. His road back will not be a smooth one, nor will it lead, as he had hoped, to a clear destination. "It will be a road like other roads, with stones and good stretches, with places torn up, with villages and fields—a road of toil. And I shall be alone. Perhaps sometimes I shall find some one to go with me a stage of the journey—but for all of it, probably no one. . . . Perhaps I shall never be really happy again; perhaps the war has destroyed that, and no doubt I shall always be a little inattentive and nowhere quite at home—but I shall probably never be wholly unhappy either—for something will always be there to sustain me, be it merely my own hands, or a tree, or the breathing earth."

MARGARET WALLACE

WORLD CHAMPIONS *by Paul Morand* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $2.50)

M. MORAND'S novel opens with a relay race, and the story itself is very much like such a contest. It moves at the same speed, and the reader has to follow the actions of four equally important characters. This quartet is made up of members of the class of 1909 at Columbia University. At the time of their graduation they form a club called "The Champions", with the object of convening at the end of every decade and comparing their successes. The thought of such a periodic investigation would make most men exceedingly nervous, but not so the Champions. At their first meeting three of them are already astride pinnacles—one a great athlete, one a great aviator, one a great financier—while the fourth has found his way to jail. The second meeting, however, finds the athlete and the aviator on the skids and headed down hill, and the financier facing death from overwork. The moral of the story is that Americans are dependent on women; are either made or unmade by them, as the case may be, but have, without them, neither failure nor success.

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The story is in every way characteristic of its author, though it is much inferior to *Open All Night*. It reads as if it had been written during one short sitting, and there are as many lurid details and incidents as there are pages. The characters scream, break dishes, and swoon with lust. One woman is so lovely that all other women desert the room she enters. Another enjoys the privilege of being addressed as *tu* by the King of Spain. It is nothing for a man to be secret master of all Asia. In his intoxication with size, splendour and success, Morand improves on the magazines devoted to the adulation of those things, but no one could improve on him.

THE FORGE *by T. S. Stribling* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

THE Civil War is the background of this lengthy novel. The situations on which it is built are those which have gone to the making of a multitude of plays, romances, movies. A daughter of the South in love with a Union man. A proud old family ruined by the war. A negress raped by a white gentleman. A slave who discovers that she is the daughter of her white master and the sister of the haughty ladies whom she has had to serve. . . . These hoary situations have assuredly served their turns, yet their presence here does not in itself constitute a reproach, since they perhaps *do* represent the dramatic features of the period. With skill, passion, and direction they might even now be capable of use.

The rather sprawling narrative centers on the war and post-war experiences of a single family—a proud, quarrelsome, individualistic little group. Though they will admit of no superiors, the Vaidens are shown to be, in station, midway between the rich aristocratic Lacefields and the poor mercenary De Shears. The loves and war adventures of the younger Vaidens are half-realistically, half-romantically described, and the career of Gracie, a quadroon, is, in the same mixed manner, followed: her degradation as a slave, her glory as the mistress of a carpet-bagger politician, her final return to the Vaidens and degradation. It appears to have been part of the author's object to illustrate the relations of an average family and its slaves: the surface affection and dependence and the basic hostility of the two—an analysis of the situation which will not be new to the student of social history.

That is about all that can be said in summary; the book has no plot in the traditional sense, nor has it, evidently, the thematic structure of much contemporary fiction. It strikes one as a collection of random legends about a single family. These often begin well, the reader settles down to his excitement, but in nearly every instance there is a dwindling away. It may be that the author prematurely loses interest in his episodes, or it may be that he hasn't the courage for melodrama, or on the other hand it may not be a question of courage and interest at all but merely a defect in power. Unfortunately the characters also miss their mark. Mr. Stribling's idea of humanity is that it is full of diverse impulses and that a given individual is now selfish, now unselfish, now kind, now cruel. To demonstrate this novel view he incessantly turns the tables on his creations, showing Marcia Vaiden as at one moment distracted over the sale of a slave and at the next lost in revery over a new dress. But the author manages these reversals with so little tact that, while the philosophy stands out all too clearly, the lineaments of character are confused or lost.

FREDERICK DUPEE

SALUTE TO HEAVEN *by Manfred Hausmann* (KNOPF. $2.50)

WHETHER this is Herr Hausmann's first book, or simply his first to be translated, we are not informed by the publisher. In common with many other Europeans of the war and post-war generations, he writes of soci-

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ety in dissolution, of people living without faith in creed or man, unhappy, bitter, violent in pleasures, inconstant in aim, attempting by revolt, adventure, various ways of escape, to achieve a personal integrity.

Hausmann's novel—it is picaresque in design—is in reality a group of powerful short stories, unified through the personality of Lampion, an educated, alert vagabond, who narrates and interprets his adventures.

Figure Eight is a superb story; its tragedy is ugly, horrible; its characters disturbingly real. It is not by any means a *tour de force* in horror; it is the work of an authentic artist. While Hausmann is a romantic *malgré lui*, again like many of his generation, he is too sure a creator, and too sensitive in observation, too much a realist, too ironic, to indulge himself in the sentimentality of the mere macabre; nor does he wallow in the sordid.

Lampion, walking over the Bridge of Charles Theodore in Heidelberg, is attracted to a lovely girl. She is troubled, and he talks to her; he discovers that she is trying to find courage to jump into the river; she is going to have a baby and is unwilling to bring disgrace upon her family—her father is a well-known professor; she is naïve. Lampion, bit by bit, hears the story of her love affair with a vagabond. He tries to cheer her up, to give her courage to live; he finally succeeds. Together they go to a carnival, a river-side Coney Island, and try all the amusements. For climax in pleasure and forgetfulness there is the dangerous roller-coaster, Grote's Figure Eight; Julie is happy and smiling; Lampion has brought her out of her morbid fear; in ecstasy of enjoyment and peace, they repeat the exciting ride on the roller-coaster and Julie, reckless of danger, stands up to express her joy in a gesture; she is instantly killed. This plot, with its possible opportunities for sentimentality and melodrama, would be the undoing of any but the authentic writer; Hausmann has given it the vital life of unforgettable tragedy.

A Salute to Heaven, the story from which the novel takes its title, is a modern *Evangeline*, with, of course, important differences. Fritz Gehrken, a German schoolmaster on a holiday in Amsterdam, meets and falls in love with a Dutch Jewess; he knows no Dutch, and she no German; the story of their love is a gay, charming idyll. Fritz returns home; they write; they are to marry. He goes to Amsterdam to surprise her, only to learn that she has gone to visit him in Delmenhorst. He hurries home; she hasn't come; she hasn't returned to Amsterdam; he never finds her. When Lampion meets him, he is corroded with despair, and survives only by the consolations of a romantic fatalism, hope turned in upon itself.

Lampion encounters others of other minds. Hausmann's stories are imbued with the doubts, the philosophic struggles of his characters; one encounters here the malevolent will of Hardy, various degrees of pantheism, intimations of mysticism akin to that of Rilke, and stoicism, fatalism, atheism, believed, or accepted unwillingly, by people striving to find God.

COLEY TAYLOR

SURF *by Knud Andersen* (CENTURY. $2.00)

THIS is a story of atmosphere splendidly told but sadly ineffective in other ways. It is evident that Knud Andersen knows the sea far better than he knows the people sailing it, and infinitely better than he does the humans who live on land. The sea has found in him an ardent convert, a worshipper of its crashing might and changing moods, of its lulling meekness and insatiable lusts. It has made a poet of him. Whatever he says or thinks of man has been inspired by the sea. This at once determines the merits and shortcomings of the author.

What makes the story of *Surf* fall short of its telling is Andersen's insistence on solving a problem which really does not exist. That problem is the alleged antithesis between

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the hero and the heroine in the matter of religious convictions. Yet both are theists, Ture an unaffiliated Spiritualist, his wife a devout member of the Lutheran-Evangelical Church. Again, when the author talks of the gap between them as individuals, when he makes Helen rebuke her husband for being "ignorant and unrefined" or regret her inability "to express herself to some one who understands", the reader is not only expected to take all that for granted but must do so in the face of evidence to the contrary. He is therefore driven to the conclusion that if the marriage of Ture and Helen, theoretically at least, proves stormier than the sea of the hero's wanderings so vividly presented, it is because Knud Andersen has set his heart on making it so for the sake of proving a thesis.

LOUIS RICH

DARK BRIDWELL *by Vardis Fisher* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $2.50)

To ONE of the small canyons of Snake River, in Idaho, came Charley Bridwell, his young wife Lela and their three small children. They came from a noisy and ugly railroad town partly to escape the demands of a civilization in which Charley had no place and partly because of Charley's fear that Lela might some day leave him. She was younger than he and very beautiful and in this far valley Charley hoped to find the freedom to indulge in his own peculiar philosophy of life and at the same time keep Lela safe from the lewd stares of other men.

With what success these hopes were realized the reader must judge for himself. Certainly few men had the opportunity to stare at Lela lewdly or otherwise, and Charley indulged to the limit his distaste for work which he saw as a senseless rushing from sunrise to sunset. He possessed courage, great strength, an endless fund of nonsense and a "pure and romantic love beyond understanding" for his wife. He was lazy, a drunkard and capable of an inhuman brutality. In short, his character was so made up of paradoxes that he became a legend in the country. He could be infinitely gentle and unpityingly cruel and Mr. Fisher would have the reader believe that he was, withal, lovable. Perhaps so, but the tales of his brutalities and sadistic pranks so outnumber the references to his kindly qualities as to make his lovableness scarcely convincing.

The story is Charley's although the book is divided into three parts, the other two being devoted primarily to his son Jed, who hates him and whose burning desire is to surpass him in strength and brutality, and to his wife Lela who, torn between love for him and hate for what he has done to her sons, is driven beyond endurance and leaves him as he long ago feared she would. Not quite successfully Mr. Fisher has drawn a parallel between the wild primitive brutality and beauty of the mountains and the rushing river and the passionate emotions and impulses of this strange man. The brutality is there but not the beauty.

MILDRED SEITZ

SAMSON AND DELILAH *by Felix Salten* (SIMON & SCHUSTER. $2.50)

VIENNA knows this story by Felix Salten as *Samson,* but cannily, if not craftily, the translation for our consumption adds to the name of the hero the more seductive one of his beloved and betrayer—though Herr Salten, deliberately selective to achieve an artistic plot, makes Delilah not the sly woman of the Old Testament original.

Within a few pages of the opening incident the most prejudiced judge of the appropriateness of the attempt to amplify the simple annals of the ancients finds himself held in spite of his critical aloofness. Can it be possible that this superhuman youth of the foxes and jackals with the burning brands tied to their tails can be the same man upon whom he has always been inclined to bestow a measure of scorn? The birth of Samson

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had been announced by an angel; he was endowed by God; but with all the marks of divine favour he had gone in with harlots; his first wife had wheedled from him the answer to his riddle; and Delilah had asked him often enough the secret of his strength to arouse a mild suspicion in anyone less than a lunkhead;—and the Bible declares solemnly that Samson had "judged Israel twenty years".

Can Felix Salten make effective the story of this man's tragedy? To one's astonishment he does.

Skilfully omitting every reference to any definite fact concerning his hero's first marital misfortune lest the reader judge him too soon, and skilfully telescoping the twenty years of the Bible to present the powerful scourge of the Philistines as a youth, the story-teller adds to the simple original plot character after character. Of the traditional Delilah not a shade remains. The proud, loyal daughter of her people has become an absorbed lover, seduced by a vile younger sister into teasing the nightly visitor to the roof of their house into telling—as both he and she suppose—to her alone the power of his unshorn locks, while Kadita crouches on the steps.

This younger sister, feigning innocence but adept in every guile of the courtesan at heart, vile as any villain of any period, is the most vivid and original creation in the story. Beside her the blundering Delilah fades into a conventional flat cut-out figure.

Though the story is merely a half-novel of one hundred and ninety-two pages, its author does not miss a single opportunity for interest. As judge, Samson sentences to labour in the mill a youth for seducing a girl; that youth, later returned to his city, helps wreak revenge in kind. The shrewd old mother of Samson can hear with complacency the tales of her son's nights and calmly approve with the reason, "He spares our girls". Suggestions of characteristic oriental eroticism are introduced in similes and descriptions, as of the nudeness of the princess Ganna, to whose jealousy and hatred of Samson are added touches of the longings of the woman for the powerful man always supplied in modern versions of that other frequently retold tale of Salome, the daughter of Herodias, and John the Baptist.

Naturally enough, the style, though easy and idiomatic, suffers by comparison with that of the Authorized Version.

CLARENCE STRATTON

MARDEN FEE *by Gerald Bullett* (KNOPF. $2.50)

THE Freudian myth of the wicked old Father of the Tribe who holds a monopoly on marriage and the embittered young sons who pine for their sisters has worked its way into modern fiction. Mr. Gerald Bullett has adopted the motive and done much to adorn it. We start three thousand years ago in the southern woodlands of Britain. Koor the patriarch is a little doddery by now, but he has by no means lost his grip. The witch doctor and the village spy contrive to keep his power undiminished and his sons still regard him with reverential dislike. But events are moving. The most adventurous of the young men brings in a woman from a foreign tribe; and another young primitive, less of a hero but with some stirrings of rationalism in his head, takes a woman to himself rather brusquely and finds to his dismay that she is a half-sister of his. In the disturbances that follow, Father, in strict accordance with the myth, is killed and worshipped. Since these are the progenitors of Englishmen, however, he is not eaten. The episode ends happily and we are transported, for the larger half of the book, to the eighteenth century. On the same spot of ground—now the Sussex village of Marden Fee—a not dissimilar story unfolds itself. So durable are the emotions of man; "we are the children of Koor", as Mr. Bullett remarks. For the sake of continuity it is to be regretted that cannibalism is left in the

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air; but a modified incest still raises its comely but tragic head. As we have said, however, Mr. Bullett adorns his motive. He does not stress his parallels. His canvas is large and he gives us a prodigality of clear studies of character. The conversation of his rustics is full of idiom and freshness, and his natural descriptions are delightful. Many people will like his comments on Time, Chaos, and the transitory life of Man; and everyone will admire the finish of his style.

ALAN PORTER

JOHN MISTLETOE *by Christopher Morley* (DOUBLEDAY, DORAN. $2.50)

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY has his own sort of courage. Capable of doing something really good (the middle sections of *Thunder on the Left* contain some excellent prose in which whimsicality is mainly absent), he continues to offer us the sort of stuff that keeps Dorothy Parker in a pet. *John Mistletoe* is Parker-bait; far from being full-cycle autobiography, it is merely a pleasant history of Mr. Morley's affections. Mistletoe is the plum-pudding-old-cheese-and-Barrie part of the Morleyesque character, and the biography of the part is achieved by the very selective honesty that gives Theodore Dreiser addicts the shudders. Even a Caspar Milquetoast might pardonably feel, on reaching page 450, that peculiar cloying sensation bred of too much contact with cheery persiflage about poets, pedants and compositors. For Mistletoe is a true child of the Stevenson who would not look into the bottom of the well of life, and he is bent on loving the world at all costs. This book is his grammar of surprise; and boredom, fear, despondency and nervous abrasion, all of which are very much part of any normal life, are very much kept in abeyance.

Mistletoe is "deeply infected with the wild beauty and lunacy of New York". So are most of us, at times; but there are also moments during which Gotham seems more on the order of Mr. Chase's Mad Hatter's Dirty Teacup. The New York that holds Mistletoe's affection is neither the metropolis of Arno, nor the city of Walter Winchell. It is mostly a city through which Mr. Morley walks thinking of Shakespeare, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson and, to be fair, Don Marquis.

Like Elmer Davis, Mistletoe thinks of 1913 (or thereabouts) as the good old days. The years before the war, when he was an undergraduate at Haverford, seem actually more distant to him than the England of Shakespeare or Hazlitt. How innocent seems 1910, with its connotations of Billy Watson's Beef Trust, its mild Bohemianism! How strange seems 1912, when Vachel Lindsay was peddling his rhymes for bread, and Henry Mencken was writing reviews for the *Smart Set*! Mistletoe recalls it all, with a sort of wonder and perhaps a secret wild surmise that he will never be the same again.

Of course it is unfair to go at such books as *John Mistletoe* with hot tongs and pincers. Under any functional theory of literature these things have their place. If Christopher Morley had never written *Thunder on the Left* no one would trouble him. But when a man has shown that he is capable of taking a wide cut of life, it is only natural to be a bit impatient with him when he goes on blowing bubbles at the age of forty.

JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

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BIOGRAPHY

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER *by Henry Walcott Boynton* (CENTURY. $5.00)

MR. BOYNTON'S study of Cooper as a man rather than as a writer, while it does not rise to unusual heights as regards either style or insight, is readable, interestingly documented (although without page references), and is said to be based upon considerable evidence which Cooper's injunction against a biography denied Professor Lounsbury fifty years ago. The author explains that he was "given full access to a great body of family letters and books and documents, many of which have never been seen by anyone outside the Fenimore Cooper family". In addition to this material Mr. Boynton has drawn upon evidence—such as Cooper's letter of 1842 regarding the "Effingham Controversy" published in *Brother Jonathan*—long available in contemporary newspapers and correspondence which only awaited scholarly search. Ultimately, however, the "new" evidence does not modify the essential outlines of our portrait of Cooper to any great extent. Nevertheless, Cooper becomes more human and, if possible, more worthy of respect; it is pleasant to find a biographer who refrains from "debunking".

Briefly, one may say that the new evidence has to do mainly with the fact that shortly after his marriage Cooper owned a whaler, acted as a cotton broker, and was interested in Merino sheep. Mr. Boynton also presents a wealth of evidence regarding Cooper's income and the details of his arrangements with publishers and printers—he usually hired his books printed and kept his own copyrights. We learn exactly how much he derived from nearly every novel. There are also interesting family letters and diaries which throw light upon his peacefully Victorian domestic life and his love for his farm and his horses. Perhaps the most outstandingly novel conclusion reached is that "to picture this man as having gone down frustrate and embittered to the grave is to misunderstand him wholly". Doubtless his later gloominess has been exaggerated. Mr. Boynton shows, nevertheless, that, although Cooper's father left over a quarter of a million, James Fenimore's "later years were never beyond the need of worry", on account of his "unlucky speculations" and the necessity of paying his reckless brothers' debts. Furthermore, as a creative artist he was out-moded by the "delightful worldliness" and "elegant deviltry" of Bulwer Lytton, his controversial spirit had antagonized many of his readers, and he concluded—rather wistfully?—"I have long known that the country is already tired of me. . . ." If he believed "the heart of the nation is sound", he seems to have entertained doubts about the health of its other organs; for example, in 1843, speaking of the "capital mistake" of an increasingly democratic reliance upon members rather than principles, he says "it may be questioned if so loose, and capricious, and selfish a system is not in danger of becoming the very worst scheme of polity that cupidity ever set in motion". And besides, he was bilious!

Theoretically, of course, one may write of an author as a man distinct from his literary production; the final impression, however, in such a case is apt to be somewhat distorted, since the reader is likely to infer that the external happenings of the author's life were of more importance than his creative impulses and his intellectual adventurings. Mr.

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Boynton avoids this danger in part, but since scarcely anything is said of *Deerslayer*, probably Cooper's greatest creation, except that it was written and that it is great, while the commonplace details of his chess games, his farm, his runways, and the weather are chronicled at considerable length, one occasionally gets the impression of a *Hamlet* in which the hero does not appear. Thousands of people have the same external and domestic interests as Cooper; what we should especially like to know, it seems to me, is not so much what Cooper had in *common* with the average inarticulate man as in what respects he *transcended* him in order to create Leather-stocking, the great American folk-hero, an imaginative incarnation of early American manhood. If one regrets Mr. Boynton's relative silence regarding these crucial questions, one can only be grateful for the honest virtues of his study. He steers successfully a middle course between the flat foot-noted academic dissertation and the pictorial rhapsodies, unstable compounds of fact and fancy, disdaining quotation marks, which now masquerade as biographies. His treatment of Cooper is richly sympathetic and sensibly appreciative. He pleads for a consideration of historical perspective, of the intellectual and social climate in which his work was produced; for example, in discussing Cooper's much maligned "females", he remarks, in his journalistic manner, "If the brazen trollop now happens to be our ideal, we have no cause to suppose she will be less comic in the eye of tomorrow than the modest damsel of yesterday is to us. There is nothing less inherently ludicrous in the age of panties and hip-flasks than in the age of pantalets and the swoon". Mr. Boynton is particularly clear, it seems to me, in discussing the four great controversies of Cooper's life. These centered about the "Letter to General Lafayette" in which he tried to aid his old friend by supporting his claim that democracy was less expensive than a monarchy; Cooper's twenty libel suits, which he won, against newspapers which attacked his claim to his own picnic-ground at Three Mile Point; his *History of the Navy* which divided Commodore Perry's glory with another; and his hostile review of Lockhart's *Life of Scott* which treated Cooper ungenerously. The details of these controversies are too complex for summary; suffice it to say that Cooper's motives were in each case honourable, that he acted only after much provocation, and that his facts were never disproved.

Mr. Boynton calls attention to Cooper's neglected literary theory of romantic realism, paradoxical as it appears. "I have come to the conclusion", says Cooper in the preface to *The Pioneers*, "that the writer of a tale who takes the earth for the scene of his story is in some degree bound to respect human nature. Therefore I would advise anyone who may take up this book with the expectation of meeting gods and goddesses, spooks or witches, or of feeling that strong excitement that is produced by battles and murders, to throw it aside at once, for no such interest will be found in any of its pages." And in the ninth chapter of *The Pilot* the great romancer abjures "portentous traditions of cruel separations and blighted loves", "scenes of high interest and delectable pathos", and "all things supernaturally refined".

Of Cooper's religion Mr. Boynton says very little, although it seems to me highly important, underlying as it does, in part, both his literary and his political interests. If he achieved his greatest triumphs in treating the forest and the sea, was it not due in part to the fact that in the midst of nature, more than at a "church-service", he felt "alone with God"? "The woods are the true temple. . . . His voice is heard in the creaking of a dead branch, or in the song of a bird." Nevertheless, if Cooper's belief that nature is a divine revelation encouraged his romanticizing of its sanative power in terms of vivid imagery, he makes it clear in his first book, *Precaution*, that he is not a deist, and he has little more faith in current notions of

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the innate goodness of man than he has faith in Puritan notions of innate depravity. Of Quaker and Anglican sympathies (Mr. Boynton barely mentions the Quakerism which Doctor H. S. Canby thinks is so important), Cooper saw life, not as a Shelleyan outer conflict between man and institutions which cause all evil, but an an *inner* conflict: "We live in a world of transgressions and selfishness, and no pictures that represent us otherwise can be true; though happily for human nature, gleamings of that pure spirit in whose likeness man has been fashioned are to be seen relieving its deformities and mitigating if not excusing its crimes". Such being the basis of his mature religious thought, one can readily understand why he argued that "a more dangerous theory, in my judgement, cannot be broached" than that of "the possible perfection of the human race", why he argued that liberty "cannot exist . . . without many restraints on the power of the mass". Conscious of "the besetting infirmity which tempts the strong to oppress the weak", Cooper, as a political thinker, is akin to Burke, who said that "society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there must be without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free". He is akin to another New Yorker, Alexander Hamilton, who, mindful of the sway of "private interest", desired "a permanent *will*", "a principle in government capable of resisting the popular current", since the "turbulent and uncontrollable disposition" of the people "requires checks". Like Marshall, Cooper thought "the legislature . . . the power most to be distrusted", and in *The American Democrat* he defended the Supreme Court as a necessary "power to decide on the constitutionality of laws", "to guard against all excesses of popular power". Such was the political philosophy of the son of the Federalist Judge Cooper, the feudal land-owner; the trim ex-midshipman who married into the Loyalist family of De Lancey; the young man tutored by the Tory rector of St. Peter's; the country squire who consorted with Governor Jay, Irving, and Bryant; the mature observer who fearlessly proclaimed the dangers of European aristocracy on the one hand and those of an absolute democracy on the other because, social-minded as he was, he was devoted to the high destiny of the American people.

HARRY HAYDEN CLARK

THEODORE ROOSEVELT *by Walter F. McCaleb* (BONI. $4.00)

ROOSEVELT's place in history is still a matter of controversy. The flood of biographies of our most strenuous president is unceasing, and until recently but few of them have questioned the aureole which had gathered about the head of Roosevelt. But a new generation is arising, men and women who have known Roosevelt only by hearsay and who have never been forced to take sides in the controversies which he stimulated. Perhaps now a re-evaluation of Roosevelt is possible; certainly there are many indications that a new estimate is desired.

Walter F. McCaleb's *Theodore Roosevelt* is one bit of evidence of the attempt to portray a different man from the traditional Rough Rider whom fate placed in the White House. While in many ways this most recent biography is disappointing, the author has put his finger on many of the weak spots in Roosevelt's character and has questioned seriously the validity of the gospel according to Saint Theodore. Roosevelt, as Mr. McCaleb demonstrates, was one of those who can run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. From the moment of his entrance into politics in 1880 until the end of his life, Roosevelt was the politician, appealing to the masses and ever listening for their applause, yet hand in glove with the political bosses and the captains of industry. As a young man he supported Blaine for the presidency al-

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though he considered him unfit for the office; when governor of New York he worked regularly with Tom Platt, the notorious boss of the State. Even as a "trust-busting" president, Roosevelt was too frequently influenced by the money barons. Yet all through life there was a rigid adherence to honesty, to patriotic service, to love of fellow man, and an extolling of the rugged, simple virtues.

Mr. McCaleb is at his best, perhaps, in the discussion of Roosevelt as president, although his treatment has some notable omissions. He shows that the attack on the trusts "only scotched the snake" because Roosevelt failed to comprehend that the evil could be cured only by seeking its cause. In a detailed examination of the Panama affair Roosevelt does not come off well; the affair is probably the darkest blotch on his and America's escutcheon. Roosevelt at the time of the 1907 panic is shown to have been duped by Morgan, Frick and Gary in an episode which does no credit to the ethical standards of the financiers or to Roosevelt's perspicacity. According to his biographer, Roosevelt's really great work as president was the conservation movement and the accomplishments in this field are likely to be his permanent monument.

E. FRANCIS BROWN

STRESEMANN *by Antonina Vallentin-Luchaire* (R. R. SMITH. $4.00)

At the time Frau Vallentin-Luchaire's biography of the German statesman who signed the Locarno Pact, put through the Young Plan and brought Germany into the League of Nations, appeared, it seemed just a pious memorial to a dead politician. Within a few weeks of its appearance in an English translation, it has become a book which must be read if we are to appreciate the force and meaning of the sudden wave of agitation about German reparations.

Stresemann was a typical product of the old middle-class Germany, the son of a Berlin restaurant keeper, whose university education, experience in the organization of a merger of the Saxon Chocolate Manufacturers, and parliamentary career were devoid of any cosmic significance. With his bullet-head, thick creased neck, stocky figure and heavy-lidded eyes, he was the typical Teuton of the cartoonists. His character was "a cross-section of all the characteristics that go to make up the essential German spirit". He supported the war and the submarine campaign. He believed in force, authority and discipline in politics. Happily married, unsuspecting, thorough and loyal, he was of a piece with many other middle-class politicians in the old Kaiserliche Empire.

Then came the Armistice, the Kaiser's abdication, the French occupation of the Ruhr. Stresemann learned, by accident, from Helfferich that the German naval authorities had made fools of the German people during the war. Germany was faced with a desperate crisis and Stresemann discovered that no one was prepared to take responsibility. "What is it that the German people lack?" he asked the Reichstag. "It is courage to take responsibility." He took it. He used Von Seeckt and the Reichswehr to crush Bavarian separatism, disaffection in the Rhineland, Communism in Saxony. He preserved the work of Bismarck and taught his reluctant countrymen that they had really lost the war, and that Germany's true policy was to strengthen its own national life "by the advancement of peaceful understanding".

It was a bitter lesson. Stresemann's cabinet fell late in 1923, but the following year saw him promoting the Dawes Plan, and building up, against profound discouragements abroad and opposition at home, the renunciation of Alsace-Lorraine which made Locarno possible. Then came Germany's entry into the League of Nations and soon Briand and Stresemann were hobnobbing at Thoiry, working out a plan for "the defense of national individuality against the advance of Americanism"—a program to be carried out

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by borrowing a large sum from American bankers. Step by step, Stresemann re-oriented German policy towards the West, first through the Kellogg Pact of 1928 and then through the Young Plan of 1929. When all was done and all arrangements made for the evacuation of German territory by the allied troops, Stresemann's work was accomplished. He had restored the principle of coöperation in European politics and had completed the preliminary liquidation of the war. He died in harness, content with his work.

It was a great achievement. Frau Antonina Vallentin-Luchaire writes with an intimate knowledge of men and events possible only to the head of a brilliant Berlin salon. Her character sketches are illuminating and much secret history is revealed. Out of it all emerges the figure of a man who was not afraid to take responsibility, not afraid to do the unpopular thing, who restored Germany to a place in the diplomatic sun. For it is, or should be, apparent that every country in the world consists of at least two countries. It was Stresemann's fate to bring the second Germany—the Germany of intellectuals, shopkeepers, *studentlieder*, beer and Beethoven—face to face with the second France —the nation of Briand, *vin ordinaire*, petty commerce and salty common sense—despite the fury of nationalists, industrialists, and political traditions. It is well to remember the second Germany, the second France, and for that matter, the second America, whenever emotion leads us to condemn the first. For only by the consciousness of an underlying like-mindedness can the nations of the world progress towards peaceful coöperation.

JOHN CARTER

PRINCE CONSORT *by Frank B. Chancellor* (DIAL PRESS. $5.00)

No ONE has ever doubted that Prince Albert virtually governed Victoria and her Empire, and that he was in a large measure responsible for that quality in her reign which we are accustomed to call Victorian. But it is difficult to determine by what means the handsome and insignificant Coburg princeling, a foreign interloper who had for many years no official position at the English court, managed to attain such ascendency. It is possible to paint Albert in a completely saintlike guise, as a patient and high-minded prince who never spared himself in the performance of his duty, and who asked for little reward or recognition. On the other hand, arguing *a posteriori*, he may be portrayed as a preternaturally shrewd and cautious schemer, who secured by devious ways the power he was officially denied.

Mr. Chancellor has done neither of these things. In the first biography that has been written about Albert since the death of Victoria, he has pursued a careful middle course, setting down such facts as are indisputable and drawing from them only obvious conclusions. Doubtless by the sacrifice of the potential colour and sprightliness of his narrative, he has come somewhere near the truth—that Albert was a capable German business man, inflexible in his notions of right and wrong; that he understood the peculiar difficulties of his position and resented them with a deep-seated, if inconspicuous, pride; that he was, in the main, loyal and conscientious in placing the interests of his dynasty above his personal interests; that he governed his borrowed kingdom wisely and increased the power of the monarchy in England, while he detracted from its aristocratic pageantry; and that, like many strong and successful business men, he made a very bad job of educating his sons.

In spite of its competent prose, Mr. Chancellor's biography has no great literary value. The organization is difficult to follow, a circumstance which is aggravated by Mr. Chancellor's failure to cite dates at important points in the narrative. And except for general acknowledgments the work has been left entirely undocumented.

MARGARET WALLACE

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THE LIFE OF THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE *by Robert Sencourt* (SCRIBNER'S. $5.00)

A ROMANTIC temper sustained by great personal charm and a strong will are qualities which may well explain both Eugénie's victories and defeats. Without these elements of character, she would scarcely have become Empress of the French; without them, perhaps, neither the Mexican fiasco nor her husband's bewildered struggles amid Bismarckian diplomacy would have occurred.

That which Mr. Sencourt calls Eugénie's "heroic will" is evident almost from childhood. She is beautiful, knows it, is determined to exploit her loveliness and rank to the fullest degree. Her adolescent rebuff at the hands of the Marquis of Alcanizes, her sister's admirer, is apparently a permanent stimulant to her inward independence of men and masculinity. Thereafter, systematic coquetry is a phase of her ambitious progress. Her fate, and "heroic will", take her to France, to Paris, to St. Cloud; across the intrigues of diplomats and designing women; across the varying and confused emotions of Louis Napoleon himself—to the throne of an alien people. To this people she was to remain an alien, during her reign and afterward. Her memory is still that of a brilliant foreigner to all true Parisians, and there is little reason to suppose that this will change.

Mr. Sencourt's biography is a distinguished work of art. It is abundantly endowed with the glamour and wit and sadness so universally associated with the Empress herself. There is, no doubt, some bias in favour of the heroine. Were it otherwise, the author of this charming volume would have been chained to earth; whereas the very essence of Eugénie's extraordinary career was a flight into the improbable. Without strong sympathy for this creature of fantastic triumphs, of even more fantastic adversities and griefs, there could have been no rendering of the truth.

There is, perhaps, too little discussion of the political and economic impingement of Eugénie's important decisions as Empress. Her influence was never negligible. There were moments when her views were paramount. Such men as Morny, Cavour, and even Bismarck, recognized her as a major political force. Napoleon himself was pathetically unable to cope with her resolute, not to say fanatic, handling of the Mexican adventure.

Eugénie was an absolutist. Her cure for the evils of absolutism was more absolutism. It was Morny, representative and seer of a new material order, who argued for liberalism as a national safety valve after the humiliations of Villafranca. But the exquisite Spaniard was little interested in economics or legislative bodies. She sought to restore prestige; forgetting that real splendour, of whatever sort, needs a substructure.

Robert Sencourt may be congratulated upon the use to which he has put newly available materials. The documents in Vienna and the Palacio de Liria, as well as Queen Victoria's letters and obviously authentic personal statements made to the author, have been employed with discrimination and skill. The result is a refreshing departure from the prolixity and detail of the average biography. While in the Strachey tradition, the narrative is sufficiently perfect both in structure and style to serve as an independent model.

ARMAND BURKE

NOGUCHI *by Gustav Eckstein* (HARPERS. $5.00)

NOGUCHI's career was brilliant, but that is not the important thing. Men of great achievement are almost commonplace with us now. His great work on venoms and syphilis has been acclaimed by his peers and the human race is his debtor. His death in his attempts to find the ultimate truth about yellow fever was in keeping with his life:

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For the development of a peasant boy with a crippled hand into a scientist of world-wide renown is only another version of the captivating story of Dick Whittington. But one must be grateful to Doctor Eckstein for giving us instead the portrait of a young Japanese boy who borrowed money casually, was lazy and mad by turns, and even at the end of his career refused to fit into the mould that success usually clamps on its victims. Human greatness and human frailty that make up genius are parts of a psychological mosaic whose design we cannot yet trace. This book by a scientist about a scientist demonstrates that. Yet strangely enough it achieves a synthesis. Gradually as we look at this intense and sincere personality, we come to understand and admire. We see a man and not a frock-coated automaton who made good by following a few simple platitudes. Yet the book is not faultless. For though it was the result of clear insight one wonders how that end could have been attained by such creaking technical machinery. The use of the dramatic present tense and more than a bit of occidental head-patting becomes annoying. The chapters are short and almost episodic. There is of necessity much scientific material woven in, though it is in the main done skilfully with no undue writing down for the layman.

PAUL ALLEN

THE DIARIES OF JOHN BRIGHT *edited by R. A. J. Walling* (MORROW. $7.50)

No period in English history is more interesting politically than the period from the battle of Waterloo to Gladstone's final retirement—except, perhaps, the present. And the close analogy of the present to the post-Napoleonic era has often been pointed out. The period, which roughly corresponds with the Victorian Age, witnessed two simultaneous revolutions, of which one was in some degree the cause of the other. They were the Industrial Revolution culminating in the Crystal Palace Exposition, and the political revolution effected by the three Reform Bills of 1832, 1867, and 1884 and their concomitants. Both of these revolutions entailed the break-up of the old Whig aristocracy. The entering wedge in the one case was the Catholic Emancipation Act, in the other the Repeal of the Corn Laws.

It was a period marked by revolutions throughout the world; and the changing of the old order was brought about only by violence and civil bloodshed. The fact that in England alone the revolution was peaceful is a remarkable tribute to the quality of the statesmanship which was called into action. The aristocracy saved its influence by resigning its privilege, and in both spheres the reform was finally put through by the leaders of the very class against whom it was directed. Peel and Russell saw their duty and they did it, though it cost the former his popularity and his place.

The character of the reformers was, however, the principal factor in the success of reform, as the *Diaries of John Bright* eloquently testify. We think of him most often as the partner of Cobden in the unflagging labours for Corn Law Repeal, as the friend of the North who used his enormous influence to prevent a breach between England and the United States during the American Civil War, and as the associate of Gladstone in the founding of the Liberal Party. But all through his long career in Parliament he was unremitting in his advocacy of peace abroad and liberalism at home. (He even tried, though in vain, to overcome the "childish fears" of the military party with regard to a Channel Tunnel.) He was probably the most important statesman of the century not to become an important member of the Cabinet. He owed his influence to the nobility of his character and to his extraordinary gifts as an orator. His great speech attacking the policy of the Government in the Crimean War and ending with the passage on the Angel of Death which is one

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of the great pieces of English prose, so moved his auditors and so crushed those at whom it was aimed, that on its conclusion the House of Commons adjourned in silence, a tribute without precedent.

The Diaries have been quoted to some extent by T. M. Trevelyan in his biography of Bright, but this is the first time that they have been printed so fully. To say that Mr. Walling has merely edited them hardly does him justice. The manner in which he has supplied the missing details and placed the entries in their proper setting is wholly admirable. He has in effect produced a new and intimate biography, and one of a kind not generally written of late in connection with the Victorians. After so many "exposures" from without it is refreshing to find a Victorian allowed to reveal himself from within. And the impression given is of a great and good man—and unbelievably modest. When Mr. Humphry Ward was proposing to write a life of him, Bright wrote in his diary: "I am against biographies and portraits and statues. They are troublesome and are soon forgotten, and of no influence in the future. I have been and am a victim of the habit of my time to commemorate the ordinary labours of ordinary lives". Happy the country and the time where such labours and such lives are "ordinary"!

It is true that Bright had his weaknesses —we have noticed some of his weaknesses as a public man and his personal failings were consonant with them. He ceased to have anything to do with Lord John Russell when he abandoned reform in the House of Commons for reaction in the House of Lords; it was years before he would even accept Russell's invitations to dine. He never more than tolerated Disraeli, and on the latter's death wrote in his diary: "His life has been devoted to the pursuit of his own personal ambition, and political principles and his Party have been made subservient to that end. . . . His success shows what may be done by unworthy means, and to offer him as an example is to encourage other men to do evil".

On the other hand, *The Diaries* show that Bright's political breach with Gladstone over Egypt never altered their personal friendship, as alleged by Dilke in contradiction to Morley, who is now shown to have been right. Another fact which is brought out by entries in *The Diaries* is the strong bond of sympathy—unexpected in two people of such strong characters and opposite views—which existed between Bright and Queen Victoria. To Bright the Queen was always a human being, and one whom he respected apart from his views on monarchy. To her "He was the embodiment of that sturdy, intelligent, decent-living middle-class upon which rested the security of the Throne throughout her long reign—an exemplar of conscience and sincerity in private and public life".

Bright followed American affairs closely, and Mr. Walling is usually well informed on America, as befits an annotator of Bright. In a note on Andrew Johnson, however, he makes a serious misstatement. He explains that the President demanded "severer conditions for the return of the Secession States than Congress was prepared to impose", which is the exact opposite of the truth; and that he "attempted to remove Secretary of State Stanton against the will of the Senate", which is a dangerous half-truth. The facts are, of course, that Congress adopted the oppressive Reconstruction measures over Johnson's veto, and deliberately passed the Tenure of Office Act in an attempt, happily unsuccessful, to interfere with the President's constitutional power of removal of officers whom he has appointed. This is the only blemish I have found in a delightful volume.

JAMES ORRICK

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A VARIED SHELF

THE LETTERS OF JOHN KEATS *edited by Maurice Buxton Forman* (OXFORD. TWO VOLS. $14.00)

THE work of the distinguished Keats scholar, Harry Buxton Forman, is here brought to date by his son. The present volumes are based on the former's collection of 1901, with the addition of thirteen letters. Of these new letters only three are identified by the editor. Two concern the poet's Scotch tour in 1818. The third, to Richard Woodhouse, September 21, 1819, is of considerable value. It mentions Keats's interest in Fouquet's once-famous romance *Undine* and his admiration for Charles Brockden Brown, whom he characterizes as "between Schiller and Godwin . . . powerful genius—accomplish'd horrors". His power of accurate self-criticism, now generally recognized, receives an interesting illustration. "I intend to use more finesse with the Public. It is possible to write fine things which cannot be laugh'd at in any way. *Isabella* is what I should call were I a reviewer 'A weak-sided Poem' with an amusing sober-sadness about it. . . . If I may so say, in my dramatic capacity I enter fully into the feeling: but in Propria Persona I should be apt to quiz it myself. . . . There is no objection of this kind to *Lamia*—a good deal to *St. Agnes' Eve*—only not so glaring."

The volumes are beautifully printed and bound, are not bulky, and are provided with preface, index, chronology, and—most useful of all—Harry Buxton Forman's biographical memoranda concerning Keats's correspondents.

"What manner of man was John Keats, and how did he live the life poetic? The answer to these questions lies, it seems to me, within the pages of these two volumes of his letters." Such, with due credit to Colvin and Amy Lowell and Mr. Murry, is the opinion of the editor; and we may agree, so far as understanding the mystery of such a personality is at all possible. The letters tell us much and suggest more; they are continually bringing us to subtleties of personal charm and to the brink of mental depths which no biographer can even hint at. But though they carry us so far, they leave us at the brink. The experience is like having a forgotten name hesitating just beyond the threshold of memory. With inference alone we shall never pluck the heart of this mystery.

This consideration holds with special force in the matter of the letters to Fanny Brawne. Mr. Forman quotes with approval Mr. Murry to the effect that "those who cannot understand Keats's love, will never understand his poetry, for these two things spring from a single source". Mr. Murry thinks that Keats, like Shakespeare, but unlike Rousseau, was a "true" romantic, because in him the Mind made a "faithful interpretation of the Heart . . . . with no veil of heart-inwoven lies interposed". Keats was most like Shakespeare when "utterly loyal to the unconsciousness". Hence his letters to Fanny, which are utterly loyal to the Heart, and his poems are at one in revealing the essential man. And the world is divided into two classes—those who understand this complete love and those who don't.

It is awkward to run the danger of being classed with the goats rather than the sheep, but a fresh reading of the letters forces one into a less ecstatic view. The implication that these pitiful outpourings of a sick mind are

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to be pondered as explanation of the genius that composed the great odes seems not only extravagant but critically fallacious. Mr. Murry would identify great poetry with the subrational. But judging from the letters up until his final illness, Keats was growing away from such romantic fallacies to the wisdom which uses reason and experience as part of an integrated personality, even—*pace* Mr. Murry—as did Shakespeare. Great poetry is still, let us hope, to be understood in and for itself; it is the best "soul-side" of the author; the other, which he shows a woman when he loves her, does indeed spring from the same human brain, but is inadequate explanation of the former by reason of its being exactly the expression of the subrational part of the personality alone, untouched by any art and unbalanced by any wisdom; of lacking, in short, universal significance.

And if the letters to Fanny cannot explain the poet, do they reveal the man? Which is right, Arnold or Mr. Murry? Our conclusion again must be that we have insufficient evidence to dogmatize. We do not have Fanny's side of the correspondence. We do not know the circumstances except as Keats refers to them. We do not know how far illness and the dread of death had warped the mirror of his spirit. We can only guess. To one reader it seems pretty clear that Fanny was not heartless but simply young, responsive to the joys of life, and less in love than Keats. As Keats increasingly abandoned himself to passion, despair, and jealousy, pity mixed with scorn must have cooled her love. And in one letter (number 209) Keats seems less generous to her than even a dying man should be. But such opinions are merely personal, for the truth must be forever uncertain. If between the nearest beings runs "the unplumb'd, salt, estranging sea", how hopelessly wide the gulf between us, the prosaic readers of the twentieth century, and the immortal genius who died in misery in 1820? Maurice Hewlett wrote: "Sir Sidney Colvin thinks that Keats revealed himself in his letters, but I cannot agree with him. Keats is one of the best letter-writers we have; he can be merry, fanciful, witty, thoughtful, even profound. He has a sardonic turn of language hardly to be equalled outside Shakespeare. . . . But Keats knew himself. 'It is a wretched thing to confess, but it is a very fact, that not one word I can utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical Nature.' So I find him in his letters, swayed rather by his fancies than his states of soul, until indeed that soul of his was wrung by agony of mind and disease of body. Revelation, then, like gouts of blood, did issue, but of that I do not now write. No man is sane at such a crisis". So much for an English novelist's view!

But if through his letters we cannot solve the mystery of Keats, we come nearest to realizing it; we come closest to the tragedy of his life; and we read with admiration and pity.

ALAN REYNOLDS THOMPSON

THE ANGELIC DOCTOR: THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS *by Jacques Maritain* (DIAL PRESS. $2.50)

"IF a common philosophy succeeded in securing acceptance by an élite in Europe, it would be the beginning of the cure of the Western world." And Jacques Maritain, the most active of modern French exponents of a return to mediaeval ideals, sees in Thomism the only philosophy capable of curing the ills of our civilization. The present book, then, is not so much an exposition of the doctrines of Saint Thomas as an attempt to illustrate the perennial influence of that philosophy not only within but also without the Church. Three main symptoms of the disease of the modern mind are agnosticism, naturalism, and individualism or "angelism", as he names that striving for superior autonomy and complete self-sufficiency which grows out of the Car-

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tesian confusion between substance and the angelic monad. Against this disease we must mobilize the philosophy of Saint Thomas who as the apostle of the mind is the apostle of our time. "Based upon objective evidence, subject to the most vigorous method, concerned to the point of scrupulosity for critical and analytical reflection, leading metaphysical reflection up the steepest and loftiest heights, Thomist philosophy is the discipline of wisdom which corresponds in the scientific order to the natural certitudes of reason." Thomism founds upon reason the objectivity of knowledge, striking a middle path between positivism and idealism; it offers a wholly satisfactory antidote to the false humanitarianism and pseudo-mysticism of the twentieth century, and establishes the dominance of supernature over reason as modern thinkers have established that of reason over nature.

As for the relation between that philosophy and the church which has consecrated it as its official body of doctrine, M. Maritain ably indicates that revelation plays the part of a negative rule in regard to philosophy by checking its conclusions. Furthermore, philosophy stands as a part and instrument of a more exalted science, theology; consequently Thomism cannot be considered outside its relation to the Catholic Church. Yet the philosophy which is to redeem the modern world must become, in so far as possible, a lay Thomism. The fault with M. Maritain's otherwise brilliantly written book is that he has insufficiently cleared up this paradox. In order to widely popularize this concept of a living, lay Thomism, he will have to come well out into the public square instead of talking from the shadow of the church portal. Almost half of *The Angelic Doctor* he has unfortunately devoted to establishing the approval of the supreme pontiffs from Alexander IV to Pius XI and to quoting paper documents accepting Thomism as the philosophy of the church.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

CAN THESE THINGS BE? *by George Seldes* (BREWER, WARREN & PUTNAM. $4.00)

IN this coruscating volume, the author of *You Can't Print That!* lives up to his previous reputation as one who can unscrew the inscrutable. In *Can These Things Be?* he takes a series of cracks at dictatorships, especially the Fascist variety, enumerates the 512,975 lives they have cost, the 162,642 wounded, and the 416,743 prisoners. He observes that Europe contains 5,550,000 men under arms, and concludes that everything is a pretty terrible mess.

Here are some of the things which, according to Mr. Seldes, are going on right now: "Italy spends 300,000,000 lire abroad annually for propaganda"; "The world faces a choice: Russian or American culture . . . and sooner or later, wise men predict, the two cultures must meet on a battlefield"; "In 1930 the European steel trust has become the most powerful factor in European political life"; Germany is prepared to enter a capitalistic encirclement against Russia; "As a creator of chemicals, Germany may well be the deciding power in the coming war"; "Certainly it looks to me as if Germany's choice will be on the red side"; Rathenau always called the author "mein lieber Seldes"; The Paris editions of the New York *Herald* and the Chicago *Tribune* "have become shoddy little harlots in unnecessary bordellos of their own creation"; "When the Bolsheviks stopped bribing the French press, the latter protested vehemently and, failing to get money, began inventing stories of Bolshevik defeats and Bolshevik terror. The defeats were lies. The Quai d'Orsay encouraged the lies. The Havas Agency circulated the propaganda of the Quai d'Orsay"; the New York *Times* refused to review *You Can't Print That!* because it criticised the Rome bureau of that paper.

It's all pretty disconcerting to discover that the world is in such a bad way and that things are going to be much worse soon.

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Curiously enough, the data assembled herein seem to date back decidedly to the period of 1918-1923. Time and distance certainly lend enchantment to sensational journalism. It is curious, too, that so well-informed a journalist as Mr. Seldes should refer to the Stefani news agency of Rome as the Stephani agency and that he should be almost as bitter over the fact that an Italophile like good old Commendatore Littlefield of the New York *Times* should have reviewed the book *Escape* by Nitti's son, as he is over the Matteotti murder. Most of us thought Littlefield did a pretty honest job, by stating at the outset of his review that he had no sympathy for the political ideas of Signor Nitti or for his son, but to Mr. Seldes this is subtly damnable.

Just the same, if you like to have your flesh creep and to see dictatorial bugaboos in the dark corners of the economic depression, with no relief in sight other than the delirium tremens of an American-Russian war, in which Germany will simultaneously remain neutral, attack Russia and join the reds, you'll have a good time with this impassioned and dramatic series of revelations. They remind one of Karl Graves, the literary German spy of the early days of our neutrality.

JOHN CARTER

CONFUCIUS AND CONFUCIANISM *by Richard Wilhelm* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $1.75)

THE unprepared reader, particularly if he makes no pretence to Sinology, will receive a shock as he reads the first chapter of this volume. For he will find, under the heading *The Life of Confucius*, identical in format to the rest of the volume, apparently from the hand of its author, such passages as the following: "The stranger asked: 'What is the stature of man's body?' Chung Ni answered: 'The Chiao Yao are three feet high; that is the extreme of smallness. The tallest men are at most ten times as tall as this.' Thereupon the stranger of Wu said: 'Magnificent! He is a philosopher'". Later the mystery will become clear to the reader when he discovers that he has been reading, not Wilhelm, but Wilhelm's translation of a biography of Confucius written by the Chinese Sse-Ma Ch'ien in the second century B.C.—a work, in other words, as dissimilar in style to Wilhelm as the New Testament is to Renan.

The able translators, Doctor George H. Danton and Doctor Annina Periam Danton, of Oberlin, tell us that this biography, so far as they know, has never appeared before in English. It comprises only the first chapter of the book, however; the rest is by Wilhelm himself (who died recently). Wilhelm examines critically the data of Sse-Ma Ch'ien, accepting some, rejecting some; he also comments on the various documents containing the Confucian teachings. This part of his admirable little book will be best appreciated by those who have already had some acquaintance with the Legge translations of the Confucian classics. But Wilhelm will interest us all where he discusses the historical significance of Confucius, attempting to make understandable to our Occidental minds the extraordinary fame of this peculiarly Chinese temperament: "For us, originality, progress, innovation, change, the revolutionary and the individualistic count as great. And in Confucius there is, at first sight, absolutely nothing to attract our attention. Indeed, he seems only to endeavour to avoid every suspicion of desiring anything new, of desiring anything else but to love the old, to hand down, and to 'make' nothing".

His comments on the teachings of Confucius are also interesting. The keyword of Confucianism, *jen*, he translates as "humanitarianism".

Wilhelm originally went to China as a missionary in 1899, "but", in the words of the translators "soon became one of those who imbibe Chinese culture, rather than one who seeks to superimpose Occidental ideals on the Orient". When he died he was professor of Chinese at the University of Frank-

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furt-am-Main. In view of his missionary experience it is interesting to note his confidence in Confucianism to hold its own as a religion: "Confucianism, as such, very definitely possesses sufficient inner elasticity to accommodate itself to modern conditions. . . . For Confucianism is community of doctrine, but not ecclesiasticism. . . . If a reawakening of Confucianism ensues today, this will once more signify a new stage of development for Confucianism. But just here lies the secret of Confucius. As he naïvely took over Chinese antiquity and did nothing more than inspire it with a new motivation, just so his influence has again and again been that of offering a new dynamic. And this spiritual impulse which he represented may, in all probability, have still further effect at the present time".

GERALD SYKES

SCENES AND PORTRAITS *by Frederic Manning* (SCRIBNER'S. $2.50)

RARELY in these iron days does one come upon a book conspicuous for fine writing. Rarely does one find a writer over whose book one may brandish the names of Pater, Landor, and (saving the desiderated James Branch Cabell) Anatole France. Indeed, the stylistic caterwauling that ordinarily passes for prose serves chiefly to precipitate grammarians' funerals, and compels sober critics to despair. By that token, the advent of such a book as *Scenes and Portraits* cannot but be greeted with an enthusiastic croak from the reviewer who, like a journalistic harpy, sits bleakly among the picked, whitened pages of this morning's best seller.

Scenes and Portraits is composed of seven vignettes. The first is in Babylonia, learned talk on the man Adam and his relation to the universe by one Merodach, a king of that place, his queen and daughter, and Bagoas, High-priest of the temple of Bel. The second is a feast at the home of Euripides, where a Socratic dialogue on the nature of God is in active progress. The third sketch, *The Friend of Paul*, takes place in the Rome of Nero, a discussion is held on the relative merits of Stoicism, Epicureanism and the new Christ religion by a parcel of elderly patricians. The fourth—and this by the way, is the gem of the collection—is concerned with the foundation of the Order of Franciscans, and shows the little Brother of Poverty gently heckling the Papal Father for official approval of his seemingly scatterbrained venture. The fifth is a letter from Thomas Cromwell written at San Casciano to his friend William Bates in England, in which he details a long conversation held with Messer Niccolo Machiavelli, a Florentine of small stature and enormous repute. The sixth is a dilettantish chat between Ernest Renan and Gioacchino Pecci, Pope of Rome, in some purely hypothetical Paradise of the Incredulous. The last, *Apologia Dei*, is pretty much what the name implies, a lengthly pronouncement on the Godhead, addressed to Lucifer.

Frederic Manning has taken the Bible for his literary specimen book; his prose is polished and modulated in a way that will rejoice the soul and refresh the vocabulary. He writes surely, concisely, without hurry or hyperbolical tricks of phrasing.

LEO KENNEDY

THE EVOLUTION OF ENGLAND *by James A. Williamson* (OXFORD. $6.00)

THERE are some good historians who always have an opinion on the events they describe. They tell us who did right and who did wrong: they tell us which movements deserved to prosper and which should never have arisen. Ther opinions are disputable; but their style of approach makes for clear, interesting and rapid narrative. Dr. Williamson belongs to this class, and he is a very attractive representative of it. He is always sure of his own ground, but his bias is never crude. It is the result of a personal attitude,

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not of prejudice or party loyalty. In consequence he has accomplished a remarkable task: he has written a social history of the English people which is always lively and alert, yet he blows no trumpets and seems to have no private thesis to maintain. "A commentary on the facts", he calls the book; and perhaps some previous knowledge of English history is necessary before it can be fully enjoyed. He confines himself mainly to "geographic circumstance, economic motive and political action", and all indigestible facts are omitted. In the closing section he reveals himself amiably as disappointed with some modern developments in England. People do less work and get more pay: yet no great economist has been found who could remonstrate with them in a way they could understand. The drivers of motor-cars are quite inconsiderate: "England was formerly a country which boasted a regard for the safety of life", but Dr. Williamson has discovered a nursing home near a busy road with the placard outside it, "Motor casualties taken in". There are too many kennels and poultry farms in England, and too little genuine agriculture. Most of these disgraces, however, seem attendant rather on the evolution of mankind than on the evolution of England.

ALAN PORTER

ONE HUNDRED RED DAYS *by Edgar Sisson* (YALE. $5.00)

MR. SISSON was sent to Russia by President Wilson in October, 1917, to "sell" to the Russian people Wilson's war aims and a belief in America's entire disinterestedness in the war, and to assist in getting into the German mind an appreciation of the growing and irresistible power of the United States as a belligerent. His training for this task had been received as a member of the Creel Committee of Public Information, whose operations were by that time spreading widely about the world. When he reached Petrograd, a month later, Kerensky and others to whom he had letters of introduction were fugitives as a result of the Bolshevist success of November 7, and the hundred days turned out to be those of the Red terror, Brest-Litovsk, and the development of control by Trotsky and Lenin.

When he went to Russia, Mr. Sisson tells us, it was "without bias against Russians of any sort, degree, or politics", but bias seems to have come quickly and to have deepened as he stayed, and there are few of the Bolshevik leaders for whom he does not evince distrust, contempt or positive hostility. His book is a lively account of his propaganda activities. He tells good-humouredly of how Creel, speaking for Wilson, "called him down" for mixing in political matters, and recounts his differences with the American ambassador, David R. Francis, his attendance at the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, and his personal or official contacts with Russian leaders, British Intelligence officers, newspaper correspondents, Y. M. C. A. members, and the motley aggregation of Americans who turned up in Russia to work for the Red Cross, pat the Bolsheviks on the back, or study the great experiment. The most important single sections relates to the so-called Sisson documents and the heated discussion of their authenticity. To the larger aspects of the history of the Russian revolution the book makes only minor contributions, but the wealth of its personal details commends it to those who prefer their history mainly in personal terms.

WILLIAM MACDONALD

THE LAST STAND *by Edmund A. Walsh* (LITTLE, BROWN. $3.00)

STUDENTS of the Communist experiment and lay readers in general will find this latest volume by the author of *The Fall of the Russian Empire* a valuable commentary on present conditions under Soviet administration. It is exhaustive and authoritative;

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Father Walsh, who was named by the Vatican in 1922 to act as director general of the Papal Relief Mission to Russia, and who has officially represented Catholic interests in that country, has been an eye-witness to the development of Russian industry under the Five-Year Plan, and presents a careful and conscientious word-picture of the resultant state of the nation as he sees it. A Jesuit himself, his book is a severe denunciation of Soviet principles and practice, but his most bitter opponent will not accuse him of tendering unsubstantiated accusations. As Father Walsh remarks, ". . . there are few events in modern times more abundantly documented than the Russian Revolution and the subsequent Bolshevik experiment". It is in the interpretation of conceded facts that opinion must inevitably differ.

"Students of Russian history who have accepted the principle of racial continuity do not consider the past thirteen years of Bolshevism as decisive or final at all", says Father Walsh, and, recalling Russia's violent history under Ivan the Terrible, and during the Mongol invasions, he points out that Bolshevism may be just another day in the millennium of Russian life. He feels certain, however, that the operation of Pyatiletka marks a crisis in Soviet rule and that its present stage may conceivably be the last stand of the experimenters. Interesting in connection with the recent publication in this country of *New Russia's Primer*, promising the advent of "healthy, strong giants, red cheeked and happy", who will enjoy a fuller, more satisfying existence under Communism, is Father Walsh's testimonial to the mechanized ugliness of the new industrialized nation. ("The Soviets aspire to hedge mankind within a huge boiler factory and ring it with a roaring loop.") Father Walsh corroborates the statement of opponents of Bolshevism that the Communist party is the actual ruling power in Russia today, with the titular Soviet "government" merely an appendage. His chapter on the question of American recognition of the Soviet union will be interesting to those who may be confused by the technicalities which this country is accustomed to take into consideration before officially acknowledging a foreign power.

Irrespective of political persuasion, it is impossible not to concede the extent of Father Walsh's knowledge of his subject, and the elegance of the prose in which he sets it forth. He is a master of style, and has an uncanny aptitude for driving home the hard logic of his reasoning with brilliantly dramatic delivery. His sentences are clean-cut and orderly after the best Latin forensic manner, but in the vigour and beauty of his imagery he is purely poetic.

BETTY DRURY

ENTER THE ACTRESS *by Rosamond Gilder* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. $5.00)

THE latest name on the roll of theatrical literature is *Enter the Actress* by Rosamond Gilder, a work of devoted research which begins with a chapter of familiar reflections on the infancy of public amusements in Greece and Rome and ends with a chapter on the fortunes of the "first lady lessee in London", Madame Vestris. Miss Gilder's purpose is to depict the lives and struggles of the early actresses against the background of their day and country, and she regales us with a gallery of fair performers whose interest is more historic than histrionic. For good measure she includes an account of that solitary sport of the Middle Ages, the nun Hrosvitha, who wrote in Latin profane plays with a sacred purpose, and a biography of Aphra Behn, the battling woman-dramatist of the Restoration.

Like all the beglamoured writers whose subject is the stage, this author dwells on the charm and vivacity of her heroines without bringing them to life. In the landscape with figures of the theatre it is most rewarding to dwell on the landscape. The actress,

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viewed from afar in her element is like a butterfly fluttering over a parterre of flowers; caught and pressed between the leaves, she is like the same insect on a pin. Of the Nell Gwyns and Peg Hugheses of Drury Lane, of Vestris, and of the Béjart sisters, Molière's comrades, all that is said here has been said before, and as well. But the careers of La Montansier, who gave plays for Marie Antoinette and survived the Revolution, of Carolina Neuber who hewed the path of the German theatre in the middle eighteenth century, and of Isabella Andreini, who, in the sixteenth, shaped the theatre of improvisation in Italy, are well worth the reader's attention and the author's labor.

Enter the Actress is meant for easy reading and is easily readable; but it would be more valuable to the student if it were more complete (the absence of Mrs. Siddons must be lamented), if space had been given to some comparison of the Continental and English theatres in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and if a bibliography had been included. The book is excellently and profusely illustrated.

OLGA KATZIN

DIARIES OF WILLIAM JOHNSTON TEMPLE, 1780–1796 *by Lewis Bettany* (OXFORD. $7.00)

"THIS edition of Temple's diaries is expected to appeal chiefly to Boswellian scholars and amateurs", writes Mr. Bettany. William Johnston Temple was a fellow student with Boswell at the University of Edinburgh, and the two men remained lifelong friends, although the private notes on Boswell's character which Temple set down in his diaries express not only the moral disapproval which might be expected, but the harsh and rather petulant dissatisfaction which Temple seems to have felt toward the world in general, including his intimates.

Temple was an obscure clergyman who never obtained the preferment in the church for which he hoped, and was too deficient in vitality and power of application to read and study systematically, and so advance himself in the profession of letters where his chief ambition lay. Perhaps ambition is too robust a word. Temple's most ardent wishes seldom seem to have been much more than velleities.

His diaries are largely divided into complaints about travel when he is away, complaints of home when he returns, notations of largely scatter-dash reading, and memoranda of visits, encounters, and persons ranging from such notables as Johnson, Bishop Warburton, Burke, and Sir Joshua Reynolds, to sub-notables such as his friend Edward Jerningham, the poet, and so on down to obscurities and mere half-identifiable names. In 1780 he confided to the first of his six diaries:

> . . . Began my journey to London and Cambridge in hopes of amusement and information. Miserably disappointed. . . . To be constantly with any one from morning till night is what I cannot support. . . . In short such a small degree of happiness as I am capable of, is only to be found at home. . . . Mortified to the last degree to have known myself so little. My wife judged better. Never will I set out on such knight-errantry again. . . .

Later he writes:

> Home is the place for little people who are little known. No living in London without servants and a carriage.

Here is an encomium on his lifelong friend and eminent correspondent, which he confided in 1783 to his second diary:

> . . . B(oswel)l irregular in his conduct and manners, selfish, indelicate, thoughtless, no sensibility or feeling for others who have not his coarse and rustick strength and spirits. Sorry I came to town to meet him. Detaining me here to no purpose. Seems often absurd and almost mad I think. . . .

In 1790 we find him writing "home is not pleasant to me and there is no society or conversation near me". He spelled the Eng-

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lish words "home" and "pleasant" in Greek letters; later he indulged more freely in this odd device, which surely could have deceived no one. In 1795 he made a three months' visit to his friend Norton Nicholls, and sang the praise of his hostess in the following sentences, again writing the English words with Greek letters, barring some exceptions, as for example v and ch, which had to be set down in good British characters:

Mrs. N. very disagreeable. Insane or drunk, I think. Never knew such a woman. Vulgar, rude, vain, selfish & malicious. Wine maketh her mad.

Mr. Bettany has been extremely industrious in verifying dates and references, identifying persons, explaining allusions, and marshalling supplementary facts. Boswellian amateurs may turn to his edition of Temple's diaries for light on a variety of minor matters of eighteenth-century history, biography, and letters. The volume is not one for general readers; an agreeable if melancholy essay could be written on Temple and his diaries, and such an essay would indeed have spared us the publication of a great deal of barren matter, which, in so far as it can be viewed with any emotion at all, arouses nothing but sadness or wry amusement. For Temple was a weak and melancholy figure.

THEODORE MORRISON

REASON AND NATURE *by Morris R. Cohen* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $5.00)

PITY the poor philosopher or scientist who would be a philosopher of science. In the end he will be what he was at the start. For if a philosopher, scientists will hold him lightly as a "prying" man, who prattles whereof he knows not. And if a scientist, philosophers will rise to remark that at least they know how to prattle. It may be supposed that an acknowledged philosopher of science must be reared by parents one of whom is a philosopher, the other a scientist. And it may as well be admitted that Doctor Cohen is a philosopher despite more than twenty years' study of scientific method. He will be suspect even though he conforms to the traditional paradox which demands that philosophers shall uphold science while scientists disparage it.

Cohen rides forth to save science—science to which in these times we bow down. But he is no Don Quixote; rather a prophet denouncing the worship of false gods. The age is rampant with irrationalism; witness James and Bergson among the philosophers and Poincaré, Mach and Karl Pearson among the scientists. Much, indeed, is said of "creative intelligence". But experimentalism and intuitionism with their capture of the popular imagination have blinded it to the essentiality of reason in scientific method—in thought generally, for that matter. It is this declining prestige of intellect which Cohen seeks to bolster, in order that science may be saved.

But what of the teaching, by now deep in the text-books, that science owes its progress to its empiricism, that a new day dawned when reliance upon mathematical reasoning was given over? Kant wrote finis to the Age of Enlightenment, and for this we have hailed him emancipator extraordinary. Shall we now hang him in effigy? Cohen intends no such thing. He is alive to the failures of eighteenth-century rationalism. But its failures were, he feels, due not to the use of reason as such, but rather in applying it to subject-matter of a transcendental and unverifiable nature. Reason needs supplementation by experiment; and it is not to be wondered at that the adoption of the experimental attitude resulted in a revitalization of science.

The axle of Cohen's thesis is the productive character of reason in giving knowledge of reality. Deduction gives new knowledge. The conclusion of a syllogism is *implied by* rather than *contained in* its premises. And the explicating of the implication adds to

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knowledge. But if this be new knowledge is it true knowledge, knowledge of reality? "Yes," says Cohen, "for the relation of implication is as objectively valid as any of the facts of physics." In other words, the logical relations upon which reason operates are not simply mental constructs but are "out there" in nature. This is why the mathematical physicist or the statistician can utilize given facts to work out laws which lead them to the discovery of new facts. Ultimately a doctrine like Cohen's is grounded in the success of science. As he says, "Empiricism breaks down in failing to account for the fundamental assumption underlying all scientific procedure: namely, that the logically necessary relations which hold between mathematical expressions hold of natural phenomena themselves"—mathematics, as per Bertrand Russell, being reducible to logic.

Logical connections exist also in the organic and social world. Accordingly Cohen votes for mechanism in preference to vitalism as the proper methodology in biology—although his demonstration involves the dubious method of showing that mechanism *may be* true and that the case for vitalism is not *conclusive*. Similarly reason should play an important rôle in psychology, ethics, law and the social sciences. But it is true that the farther we get from mathematics, the more obscure is the path of reason and the more plausible the case of the irrationalists. (It is just barely possible that we do possess souls.) Cohen names himself a rationalist, appropriately enough; and he is a realist in his doctrine of universals or eternal objects. But what other labels can be pinned to him, this book fails to reveal. He touches upon many philosophical problems, often unorthodoxly, but, even in the case of his apparently important principle of polarity, he is disappointing, being either too general or too brief. The farther reaches of Cohen's position are, of course, disputable. It is not beyond suspicion that universals, as understood by him, exhibit just such reification as that of which he complains in other philosophers. Yet it will probably be admitted that his general point of view is timely against a neglect of the function of rigorous thought, especially in the social sciences and psychology as the result of their justifiable eagerness to substitute experiment for futile speculation. It is not at all certain that life's irrationality can be reduced without remainder. But Cohen has chosen good ground in urging the cause of reason as against the postulation of some unknown and unknowable something which, by very virtue of its postulation, shuts off free inquiry.

LESLIE MANOCK PAPE

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ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

A HISTORY OF EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY DRAMA, 1800-1850 *by Allardyce Nicoll* (CAMBRIDGE; MACMILLAN. $11.00)

No PERIOD in the history of the English stage has suffered more from contemptuous generalization founded on a plenteous lack of knowledge than the early nineteenth century. Everyone knows that it cannot produce a single author or play of any except historical importance, and in this belief many students of the theatre have turned to remoter times where the multiplicity of materials for study is certainly less and where the interest and value of work may perhaps be more. A Jacobean play of little intrinsic worth, of uncertain authorship, perhaps never even played on any stage, merits a line-for-line reprint, with every whimsical spelling reproduced, and adorned with introduction, notes, and word-list. No such loving care is lavished upon the unpublished works of a Dibdin or a Sheridan Knowles. Yet the theatre appeals to more than the professional scholar, and that considerable body of men who have made the theatre their hobby, sometimes, like Mr. Robert Gould Shaw, amassing remarkable collections of materials, have generally concentrated their interest on the last century, whose actors and plays are either within or not far removed from the memory of men now living. Scholarly effort has, nevertheless, done much to enlighten the obscurity. In 1926 Professor E. B. Watson published his study of theatrical conditions, *Sheridan to Robertson*, and now Professor Allardyce Nicoll has produced in two volumes his *History of the Early Nineteenth Century Drama*.

The debt which students of the drama owe Professor Nicoll is immense. Beginning with his *History of Restoration Drama* he has added to each volume of his series a hand-list of plays, recording every one, printed or not, that he could discover. For the period from 1660-1700 he lists about 600 plays, from 1700-1750 a little less than 2,000, from 1750-1800 about 3,200. In the second volume of his present work his list for the years 1800-1850 runs to something like 12,000 titles. These figures give some idea of the magnitude and thoroughness of his labors. His work is by no means merely bibliographical, for he interprets his facts in a thoroughly readable survey, considering the theatre, the audiences, actors and managers, dramatic conditions, and most particularly the plays themselves. No one is better able to speak of these things than he, because of his position as the foremost student of the English drama since the Restoration.

In no other period in the history of the English stage is our interest so clearly centered in the theatre itself, as opposed to art or literature or the drama. Beddoes perfectly described the drama as being a "haunted ruin", haunted by the grandeur of the past, yet from this ruin was to rise finally the new life which we know as the modern drama. Though men of great abilities, like Byron, Coleridge, Shelley, Browning, tried their hands at play-writing, they failed miserably. Planché says of Leigh Hunt that he "had the wildest ideas of dramatic effect, and calculated in the most utopian spirit upon the intelligence of the British public", and those who failed as playwrights were loud in placing the blame not upon their own perhaps wild ideas but upon the stupidity of the public. The intelligence probably was low but there were healthy signs of a love of the

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theatre as well as the too obvious prudery and coarseness which gave many playwrights cause for complaint. Instead of sitting like the modern audience, patiently, uncomprehendingly, as in a temple, during the performance of a symbolical interpretation of life, they stopped the play if they were bored and if they had a grievance against those servants of the public, actors and managers, they rioted and wrecked the theatre. They were enthusiastic playgoers and since no one of sufficient power captured and formed their imaginations, their naturally low tastes, which many men proved themselves accomplished in satisfying, almost turned the theatre into the circus. A mere list of some of the kinds of entertainment offered shows to what lengths was carried the effort to please audiences. New forms there are indeed, the Comic Spectacle, the Equestrian Drama, Farcetta, Operatic Pantomime, Vaudeville. One play is even facetiously described as "A New Comic, Pathetic, Historic, Anachronasmatic, Ethic, Epic Mélange". An author like Edward Fitzball, who composed over a hundred pieces, wrote everything from *Antigone*, a tragedy, to a Musical Drama, *The Negro of Wapping, or The Boat-Builder's Hovel.*

These new forms made their contribution to the theatre of the future by breaking with the past and its rules. It is no wonder that few of the separate attempts please today a reader mindful of literary values, yet by providing amusement to men and women they more nearly served the purpose of the theatre than the studied efforts of the poets. The divorce between literature and the theatre, already appearing in the eighteenth century, had to be complete before Robertson could prepare the way for Ibsen. The audiences of the day were pleased with these wretched attempts and Lamb, Hazlitt, and Leigh Hunt have told us eloquently of the delight they took in going to the theatre, in being in a building to our way of thinking ugly and barnlike, in hearing lines to our ears artificial and unreal. Professor Nicoll says the worst that can be said for the drama of that age, at the same time aware, as a true lover of the theatre himself, of the glamour for our ancestors in what we find bathos and banality.

THEODORE BAIRD

WILLIAM GIFFORD *by Roy Benjamin Clark* (COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY PRESS. $3.00)

BY VIRTUE of his political, critical, and scholarly writings and his association with more talented men, William Gifford (1756-1826) was not unimportant in the days when Jacobin tendencies were held by all good Tories to be from the devil and against the good of England. Gifford's virulence, unfairness, inconsistencies, sourness, and blindness do not commend him as a model for modern critics; however much more amiable he was as a person, as a critic he was not above the level of his tempestuous era. Possessed of some force, common sense, and even integrity, Gifford is fairly analyzed by Mr. Clark as to character and ability.

Mr. Clark has devoted much time to the preparation of this book. He gives us chapters on Gifford's life (the poorest section probably), the *Baviad* and *Maeviad*, the *Anti-Jacobin*, which is famous for the non-Giffordian parodies, the *Epistle to Peter Pindar*, the translations of Juvenal and Persius, the editions of Massinger, Jonson, Ford, and Shirley, and the *Quarterly Review* (the most interesting chapter), and throughout relates Gifford's work to the relevant contemporaries. Though his verse satires were without great value as literature or as agents of reformation and though his scholarly projects left much to be done, Gifford's editorship of the most powerful Tory review-journal did give him an opportunity for the exercise of conservative principles. It is chiefly as the first editor of the *Quarterly Review* that the world will remember William Gifford.

Mr. Clark's book is good enough to obviate another on the same subject; it is also

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good enough to be better. Several holes are rather noticeable, especially the failure to examine Gifford's manuscript notes on Shakespeare; and the style, which is occasionally obscure, never attains the slightest distinction. Although such a volume, from the nature of the subject, can attract few general readers, the notes are allocated to the rear, a position that causes the serious student too much thumbing.

RICHMOND P. BOND

LEO TOLSTOY AND HIS WORKS *by Aylmer Maude* (OXFORD. $.50)

THIS small and attractively printed booklet is evidently to be taken as a prospectus to the Centenary Edition of Tolstoy's Works which the Oxford Press has already begun to issue. It is less of an independent study, less even of an introduction to Tolstoy than it is an advertisement of the new edition.

The booklet contains a sketch of Tolstoy's life, and with that an account of his views on sex, politics, religion and art. The latter one finds fairly uninteresting. It is not that Mr. Maude misinterprets Tolstoy, nor that he fails to do justice to his greatness, nor on the other hand that he is merely too enthusiastic, but that he has no perspective on his subject. He writes of Tolstoy, not in the light of modern interests and controversies, but as a disciple, and a Victorian disciple at that, would have written. Mr. Maude offers, moreover, a good deal of material—the experiences of a Miss Flora Shaw among cannibals, the opinions on Tolstoy of certain unknown ladies—which might have had a place in a larger work but which, here, seem scarcely relevant. In conclusion there is a bibliography of Tolstoy translations which, since it omits to name the excellent translations of Constance Garnett, can hardly be described as complete or impartial.

With regard however to the Centenary Edition, since that is the point of the booklet, we read in the last chapter an exciting account of how the Tolstoy Society came into being, how it was backed by a "very distinguished list of Vice-Presidents", and how finally a letter from Bernard Shaw set the Oxford Press in motion. The Centenary Edition is doubtless a worthy undertaking, for it promises to provide us with good translations (from the hand of Mr. and Mrs. Maude) of much of Tolstoy which hasn't hitherto been available in very good English. It is a pity however that the edition is to be limited and expensive, and that, so long as introductions to the volumes were felt to be necessary, better writers weren't found to provide them.

FREDERICK DUPEE

DICTATORSHIP ON TRIAL *edited by Otto Forst De Battaglia* (HARCOURT, BRACE. $3.75)

THIS rather unusual book is a collection of some twenty-two essays, both historical reviews and theoretical discussions, on the nature and significance of dictatorship in the modern world. The titles of its chapters range from *Dictatorship in Ancient Rome* to *Love and Dictatorship,* from *Dictatorship and Foreign Policy* to *The Problem of the Leader*; its authors include such diverse writers as Guglielmo Ferrero, André Maurois, Emile Vandervelde, Albert Einstein, Ferdinand Ossendowski, Count de Romanones and Maurice Bédel.

From this it is evident that no fair account of *Dictatorship on Trial* can be given without consideration of each separate chapter, but if we must pass upon it as a whole we have no hesitation in reporting that it is a grievous disappointment. It entirely lacks unity, and the few really provocative chapters are almost lost among the superficial and sometimes silly discussions of writers whose qualifications for their appearance in such a book we are at a loss to discover, and one looks in vain for any really critical or dispassionate study of dictatorship in either Russia or Italy.

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It is difficult to take very seriously a compendium which includes a chapter by Einstein on *Science and Dictatorship* consisting of two sentences: "A dictatorship means muzzles all round, and consequently stultification. Science can flourish only in an atmosphere of free speech"; or that allows Maurice Bédel to rave about the conflict between love and dictatorship and forecast the former's ultimate triumph when "men will once more bow beneath the yoke of their real master—the God of Love".

The editor of the volume, Otto Forst de Battaglia apparently asked for contributions from a heterogeneous list of well known publicists and had to take what he got. Unfortunately he got very little.

FOSTER RHEA DULLES

OTWAY AND LEE *by Roswell Gray Ham* (YALE. $3.00)

THOUGH Otway and Lee were contemporaries, both penniless sons of clergy who came, one from Oxford, one from Cambridge, to try for fortune in London during the Restoration, they are nowise comparable in importance. Had Mr. Ham not combined his scholarly studies of the two poets, he would have given us a less valuable criticism of their period as a whole, but he would have served his subjects more justly.

Lee (chiefly remembered or forgotten for "When Greeks joyn'd Greeks then was the tug of war") was important because he influenced Dryden as well as collaborated with him. King of bombast and ranting, he threw off now and then a striking phrase in the baroque taste:

> The Shooting Stars end all in purple Gellies
> And Chaos is at hand.

But his absolute merit is not high.

Mr. Ham speaks of both poets as "hardly more than names", which is somewhat untrue and certainly unfair to Otway, a writer of tragedy second only to Shakespeare, whose *Orphan*, however badly played, it is impossible to hear unmoved, whose *Venice Preserved* is one of the major glories of English drama. The book is packed, however, with important contributions to our knowledge of the work of both men and of their period. Many of his discoveries have been borrowed by other writers since Mr. Ham first published his original thesis on Otway in 1925. He makes illuminating comments on the influence both of the Elizabethan dramatists and of the early seventeenth-century French novelists on late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century English literature: and his story of Otway's clash with the Duke of Marlborough is not only new but extremely lively.

Despite its author's sober lack of enthusiasm for Otway, this story of the careers of two young writers, for a while so successful but both of whom died in obscurity and squalor, is as commendable for general reading as it is useful to the student.

THE COMEDY OF MANNERS FROM SHERIDAN TO MAUGHAM *by Newell D. Sawyer* (UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA PRESS. $3.00)

THIS is a strangely negative book. Its first chapter describes how the comedy of manners declined at the end of the eighteenth century, its second chapter is entitled *The Reign of Bad Taste*, and towards the close of its 243 pages the author states that "the comedy of manners . . . does not flourish on English soil", though English plays are the only ones he considers in the endless list of mostly forgotten productions of which his book is chiefly composed. Surely it was a little perverse of him to take so much pains to show that something did *not* exist.

Mr. Sawyer is quite interesting when he shows the effect of Victorian middle-class consciousness flowering into what has been dubbed "cup-and-saucer" comedy. Slowly during the last quarter of the nineteenth

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century "respectable" people began to patronize the playhouse, the theatre lost some of its low repute, educated men were seen as managers, as actors, and W. S. Gilbert came to satirize the age.

Since the book contains so many brief accounts of plots, it should be a godsend to the motion-picture companies, who are forever (and apparently unsuccessfully) combing the world for something to "adapt". It is a little difficult to see any other considerable value in it despite the conscientious work that went to its making.

IRIS BARRY

A SHAKESPEARE BIBLIOGRAPHY *by Walther Ebisch and Levin L. Schücking* (OXFORD. $7.50)

THE Oxford University Press, which has become the fountain-head for the dissemination of Shakespeare Studies in English, has just performed another service for scholars of almost greater importance than the very recent publication of Sir Edmund Chambers's *William Shakespeare*. Since William Jaggard's great work in 1911 no adequate bibliography of Shakespeariana has appeared until the present volume, which both in scope and method differs widely from its predecessor; for its compilers, the one librarian of the English seminar at the University of Leipzig and the other Professor of English literature at the same institution, have attempted to include material in all languages instead of restricting themselves to what has been printed in English and have grouped their material into many divisions and subdivisions by subject-matter rather than to follow an alphabetical listing. Thus the present bibliography is not only brought up to date (that is, through 1929), but is far more comprehensive and presents its information in a more accessible form, since an alphabetical index of authors at the end corrects the disadvantages which might arise from a classification by subject. Naturally such a compilation entails the dangers of selection, since everything that has been published on Shakespeare since his death could obviously not be included; but an attempt has been made to embrace all studies that still have any living significance, whether they were printed in the seventeenth century or within the last decade. Of course every Shakespeare authority the world over will have complaints to make, lacunae to point out, and perhaps even errors to call to our attention, but nothing is likely to prevent this work from taking its place as one of the most useful tools in any English library.

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

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THE BOOKMAN'S MONTHLY SCORE

COMPILED BY FRANK PARKER STOCKBRIDGE, LIFE MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION, IN COÖPERATION WITH THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES OF AMERICA

Your reporter recently met a critic who bemoaned the low cultural standards of the American masses as evidenced by their taste in literature. We asked him if he had read *Cakes and Ale*. The critic sniffed. He had not read any of the books listed in the Monthly Score. Whereupon we advised him to read and ponder Mr. Somerset Maugham's sage observation that, whatever current highbrow opinion may be of the popular books of a given period, it is from among these very books that posterity will choose its "classics".
—F. P. S.

NOVELS

1.	GRAND HOTEL	*Vicki Baum*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
2.	THE BRIDGE OF DESIRE	*Warwick Deeping*	MCBRIDE
3.	YEARS OF GRACE	*Margaret Ayer Barnes*	HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
4.	THE ROAD BACK*	*Erich Maria Remarque*	LITTLE, BROWN
5.	THE GOOD EARTH*	*Pearl S. Buck*	JOHN DAY
6.	SEED	*Charles G. Norris*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
7.	BACK STREET	*Fannie Hurst*	COSMOPOLITAN
8.	CAKES AND ALE	*W. Somerset Maugham*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
9.	IMPERIAL PALACE	*Arnold Bennett*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN
10.	THE DEEPENING STREAM	*Dorothy Canfield*	HARCOURT, BRACE
11.	READER, I MARRIED HIM	*Anne Green*	DUTTON
12.	THE LOVE OF JULIE BOREL*	*Kathleen Norris*	DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

GENERAL

1.	EDUCATION OF A PRINCESS	*Marie, Grand Duchess of Russia*	VIKING
2.	THE STORY OF SAN MICHELE	*Axel Munthe*	DUTTON
3.	HUMANITY UPROOTED	*Maurice Hindus*	CAPE & SMITH
4.	LITTLE AMERICA	*Richard E. Byrd*	PUTNAM
5.	GREEN HELL*	*Julian Duguid*	CENTURY
6.	THE ROAD TO CULTURE	*Charles Gray Shaw*	FUNK & WAGNALLS
7.	JUNGLE WAYS*	*W. B. Seabrook*	HARCOURT, BRACE
8.	THE LIVES OF A BENGAL LANCER	*Major F. Yeats-Brown*	VIKING
9.	MY STORY	*Mary Roberts Rinehart*	FARRAR & RINEHART
10.	THE MYSTERIOUS UNIVERSE	*Sir James Jeans*	MACMILLAN
11.	MY EXPERIENCES IN THE WORLD WAR	*General John J. Pershing*	STOKES
12.	THE GREEN PASTURES	*Marc Connelly*	FARRAR & RINEHART

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ABOUT BOOK-COLLECTING

by Wilfred Partington

End-Papers and Marginalia

London, July.

A BOOK-FIND has just been made, one as interesting as any of recent date—especially to America. I cannot give myself a bibliophilic hug for that I am the lucky finder. Instead, I take up my pen with the compensation of being not merely the first to describe it; but to bring pearls of wisdom to young Americans, to touch them with the stone of the one-and-only Philosopher.

Early in the year of redemption 1818, some two months after Shelley had "made an honest woman" of Mary, daughter of William Godwin, the said William—otherwise "the Professor" as he is named so often in Charles Lamb's correspondence—indited a *Letter of Advice to a Young American*. By this time Godwin's first wife—the lovable Mary Wollstonecraft—had cruelly succumbed in the tempest of her passion-swept life; and the Philosopher, so brilliant an antagonist of marriage, had again fallen a shamefaced victim to it. He was now—rather for worse than for better—in matrimonial partnership with the former buxom and bustling widow, Mary Jane Clairmont, whose beautiful daughter Claire had already passed through the open arms of Byron. The partnership was also commercial; and from it had blossomed (though shyly on the financial side) the publishing firm of M. J. Godwin and Co., which over-largely incorported that "damned disagreeable woman", as Elia described Mary Jane. Why, how, or for what reason will probably never be known, but this *Letter of Advice to a Young American: on the course of Studies it might be most advantageous for him to pursue* was printed, in 1818, for M. J. Godwin & Co., at their address in Skinner Street (how appropriate the name sounds when one recalls the fleecing of Shelley!). And yet, the strange thing is that this *Letter of Advice*, written by a man who was once as a Prophet to all the radicals and not a few of the geniuses of his time, has been practically unknown ever since. Now, after more than a hundred years, the first recorded copy lies before me as I write—to hand on its advice to young Americans.

It was while browsing through the latest catalogue, *Bibliotheca Miscellanea*, issued by Henry Stevens, Son & Stiles (of 39, Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1) that I came across it; and I sat up with such a start as to knock a wine-glass off the table onto the broad pate of my Airedale friend who resented her sleep being disturbed by this bibliographical emotion. There, item No. 18 set forth the title of this *Letter*; the cataloguer modestly described it as "Very rare", and, speaking on behalf of himself and the whole firm, added: "We have never before

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met with a copy of this pamphlet". Very rare, indeed; for I may now add that there is no copy of it in the British Museum; that it is not mentioned by either of Godwin's biographers—Ford K. Brown and C. K. Paul; and that no sale of a copy is recorded in *Book Auction Records* or *Book Prices Current*. There is one exception, however. The vigilant Sabin (*Dictionary of Books Relating to America*) had heard of a copy; and records it (No. 27,674. Vol. VII, 1875), although he does not state whence he derived the title, nor yet where a copy was located.

Always anxious to live and learn, I desired to share this *Advice to a Young American*; and Stevens, Son & Stiles cleared an awkward stile by promptly lending me this unique (so far as I or my dog know) copy, of which I append an exact collation for my readers.

LETTER / OF / ADVICE / TO / A YOUNG AMERICAN: / ON / THE COURSE OF STUDIES IT MIGHT BE / MOST ADVANTAGEOUS FOR HIM / TO PURSUE. / [double rule] By WILLIAM GODWIN. / [double rule] / London: / Printed for M. J. Godwin and Co. Skinner Street, / By Richard and Arthur Taylor, Shoe-Lane. / [rule]. / 1818.

Collation: Pamphlet, L. Cr. 8vo. (8¼″ x 5″); pp. 16, consisting of Title-page as above (verso blank), pp. [1.2]; Text, pp. [3]—15; p. [16] has a list of—Authors / named in the foregoing pages / ; and at foot the printers' imprint.

There are no signatures. The leaves have been stitched, probably in binding with other items. *Note:* the publisher's imprint on the Title is all in lower-sized capitals with the exception of London, which is in lower-case. The paper is watermarked 1816. The Letter is dated at end on p. 15—February 12, 1818. The first question which prompts itself is: who was "the young American"? Alas, I cannot be very informative. In the same year which saw the *Letter* printed for the Skinner-Street firm, Philosopher Godwin wrote to his Mary Jane (18 Sept., 1818): "On Thursday last I had a visit from Mr. R—— of Barbadoes, who drank three glasses of wine and I began to be afraid would want thirteen more. He is a sort of greasy, dingy, short and thick player-looking man. He enquired about the three pounds we have been overpaid, in rather an equivocal way; but I have seen no more of him". This does not look like a young American in search of academical advice; and anyhow, one to whom a credit of £3 was due by the Godwins was—*ipso facto*—immediately suspect in the Skinner-Street philosophy. In the same year the author of *Political Justice* and *Caleb Williams* (the latter still the leader of nightmare travels) was "getting a little intimate with Tom Holcroft", lending him *Plutarch's Lives*; but as the said Tom Holcroft is reported to be wishing "Mrs. Godwin were come home", it is doubtful whether he fills the rôle of the industrious student. And so, for the want of identification, it were perhaps nearer the mark to dismiss the young American as apocryphal. Not but what Godwin carries him very convincingly, not to say condescendingly. He begins:

I have thought, at least twenty times since you left London, of the promise I made you, and was at first inclined to consider it, as you appear to have done, as wholly unconditional, and to be performed out of hand. And I should perhaps have proceeded in that way; but that my situation often draws me with an imperious summons in a thousand different directions [such as touching Shelley for a thousand pounds or so after the poet's elopement with Mary], and thus the first heat of my engagement subsided. I then altered my mind, and made a resolution, that you should never have the thing you asked for, unless you wrote to remind me of my promise. I thought within myself, that if the advice was not worth that, it was not worth my trouble in digesting. From the first moment I saw you in this house, I conceived a partiality for you, founded on physiognomy in an extensive sense [I myself

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have seen some extensive physiognomies in the Strand] as comprehending countenance, voice, figure, gesture and demeanour; but if you forgot me as soon as I was out of your sight I determined that this partiality should not prove a source of trouble to me.

This is Godwin unadulterated. After a few more flourishes of the same kind, we come to business. The Young American is informed that he will find many of William's ideas of the studies to be pursued and the books to be read in Godwin's *Enquirer* (1797) and more to the same purpose in the Preface to a small book for children entitled *Scripture Histories* given in the words of the original, in two volumes, 18mo.—in which advice is a hint for collectors. (Probably refers to Mary Pilkington's *Scripture Histories* (1798), which, however, is a 12°. If so, I am unable to say whether the Preface is signed or not, as there is no copy in the British Museum. If not, the only item I can find in the famous Juvenile Library relating to Scripture history is one in Vol. III (1801), pp. 84-90 which is unsigned and of a prefatorial character.) This appears to be an example of Skinner-Street propaganda. But later on there is a warning: "I would advise a young person to be very moderate in his attention to new books. In all this world I think there is scarcely anything more despicable than the man that confines his reading to the publications of the day: he is next in rank to the boarding-school miss who devours every novel that is spawned forth from the press of the season".

Our Young American was not, of course, to take this as applying to *Mandeville*, which his adviser had just spawned forth; or to the wonderful Juvenile Library of the Godwins, including Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare* and the *Poetry for Children* by Charles and Mary. Godwin proceeds to say that to cultivate the imagination is better than to accumulate dry science and natural facts. His own imagination ran curiously. Doubtless sweeping aside a few of his worm-like begging-letters, he continued: "The noblest part of man is his moral nature; and I hold morality principally to depend, agreeably to the admirable maxim of Jesus, upon our putting ourselves in the place of another, feeling his feelings, and apprehending his desires; in a word, doing to others, as we would wish, were we they, to be done unto".

AN IMPORTANT SHORT-CUT

As for the rest of this early Correspondence Course: in the study of ancient history, Hooke and Mitford are recommended, despite the former's baleful scepticism about, and pernicious lust to dispute, the virtues of the illustrious; and the latter's almost frantic love of despotism and oppression. For the age of chivalry, he distinguishes Palaye's *Mémoires,* Southey's *Chronicles of the Cid,* Cervantes, and Ariosto. The best English poets are Shakespeare, and Milton, and Chaucer, and Spenser—although there is not even an honourable mention for a contemporary! But he was anxious not to recommend a complete cycle of the best writers on any subject. In his own experience, one author led to another; and this method was preferable. It was also a short-cut out of a long subject—with only sixteen pages in front of him; and that awful "managing woman", Mrs. G., behind him. And thus resulted the pamphlet which has now come to light; and which is so mysteriously a bibliographical rarity. I have only to add that Messrs. Stevens, Son & Stiles catalogue this first recorded copy at the very reasonable price of $50; and that a *Bibliotheca Miscellanea* which includes such a curiosity has, by the same token, other attractions.

THE PERILS OF FACSIMILE

The announcement by a London publisher of a new facsimile reprint of Poe's *Tamerlane* has led to important correspondence, some of which I have received privately. The reprint is claimed by the publishers to be "an exact facsimile of the rare Edgar Allan Poe

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item, the most expensive nineteenth-century booklet, of which but four copies exist (valued at $20,000 each)". The wording should be noted. The announcement adds: "Extreme care has been exercised to completely reproduce all details of the pamphlet including the original covers". Now, without any forensic circumlocution or split infinitives, the danger of *exact* facsimiles is this: that once published and having passed into circulation via other hands, there is a risk of such facsimiles being sold to unsuspecting or ignorant bookmen as originals. This is bad enough for the Rare-Book Trade: it is worse still for the general body of collectors. I am willing to agree that such a contingency is altogether out of the calculations of the publishers (and the practice is by no means confined to Britain) of these exact reprints. Nevertheless, can there be other than risk—once the edition is sold, and the copies have passed into other hands—if you reproduce exactly (and it is not difficult) type, paper, stains, et cetera, et cetera? With Doctor R. W. Chapman (of the Oxford University's Clarendon Press) and others, I am concerned to emphasize the necessity of avoiding the perils of facsimiles. Several methods have been tried to prevent the possibility of confusing imitation with original. The method of plate-sunk page reproduction is obviously outside the issue; while the insertion of a certificate as to facsimile has already been proved to be useless, since a skilful repairer—with the help of coffee as a stainer—can remove the certified statement and "age" the reprint even beyond the detection of experts. (Vide the letter of Messrs. A. & C Black in the Correspondence columns of *The Times Literary Supplement* for May 21, 1931.) Those of us who have gone into this question are agreed that the only safe method of distinguishing facsimiles from originals is by the use of paper watermarked with a date contemporaneous to reprinting and in a place (preferably the title) from which it cannot be removed. This matter has become so serious, although little has been written about it hitherto, that Doctor Chapman says the British Museum authorities contemplate making a regulation which will oblige anyone applying for leave to photograph a rare book or document for reproduction to sign an undertaking to use a properly watermarked paper. This is undoubtedly a move in the right direction, and would gladly be followed by similar authorities in America. But this is not a complete safeguard, since a rarity may be photographed when it is other than in the hands of Museum authorities. For buyers to require that reprints be properly watermarked is the surest way to avoid that misuse of which the publishers doubtless never dreamed.

The Demand for First Editions

The following table, compiled from various sources, shows the average weekly demand in England (on behalf of both American and British collectors) for modern first editions during the month succeeding the last issue. The table is indicative only. The absence of certain famous names does not imply lack of collecting interest in them; but rather that, in many cases, the supply of desired items is so limited as to restrict enquiries at the sources from which this table is compiled. The feature of this month's record is the rise of Leigh Hunt. The following bracketed for the next place below the minimum figure for inclusion in the table: Charles Reade, Walter de la Mare, William McFee, Richard Jefferies, and G. B. Shaw.

Kate Greenaway	25
Sir Walter Scott	19
Leigh Hunt	18
A. P. Herbert	16
Lord Byron	14
Sir Rider Haggard	14
D. H. Lawrence	14
Charles Dickens	12

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Hugh Walpole	12
Sir Conan Doyle	11
John Galsworthy	11
Rudyard Kipling	11
J. B. Priestley	11
Charles Lamb	9
Arnold Bennett	9
Lewis Carroll	9
John Keats	8

X. Y. Z.

Books and MSS in the London Sale-rooms

Loving Hearts and First Editions Cheap—The Interesting Thorn-Drury Collection—Play-wright-gallants of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

The dispersal has begun at Sotheby's of the library of the late Mr. George Thorn-Drury, K.C., one of our most authoritative specialists in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literature; and it will probably prove to be the outstanding feature of this summer's sales. His collection was the result of years of study and acquisition; and contained many rarities, including items for knowledge about which we are largely indebted to him. American interest in the dispersal was evident, and very appreciable shares of the good things were apparently secured for public and private libraries in the United States.

The ball was not opened by that lively playwright and one-time spy Mrs. Aphra Behn; but she soon tripped into the scene with some fifteen works. Thorn-Drury was not fortunate enough to be able to include the excessively rare 1st edition *Ten Pleasures of Marriage*, now generally accepted as by her; and all the items being rebound, the sale-room appearance of this array was not impressive. Her spicy comedies with their rake-catching titles—*The Forc'd Marriage* (1671), *The Credulous Cuckold* (1677) and *A New Way to play an Old Game* (1682)—as well as her *Pindaricks*, ranged between $5 and $25, the best price being $45 for the posthumously issued *The Widow Ranter, or The History of Bacon in Virginia* (1690). All the foregoing items, as well as those to follow are first editions.

Only two other copies of Henry Bold's *Poems Lyrique Macaronique Héroïque, &c.* (1664) are recorded as having occurred in the auction-rooms during the last forty-five years; and Thorn-Drury's copy went to another collection for $80. His set (edition limited to 150) of the *Collection of Old English Plays* (7 vols., 1882-90), by that fine Elizabethan scholar A. H. Bullen, realized $100—a figure to note.

After Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britanicum: A Masque at White-Hall* had realized $65, we were soon among the comedies of William Congreve which helped to incite Jeremy Collier's attack on the impiety and indecency of the seventeenth-century stage. Thorn-Drury did not possess either of the two rarest Congreves—*Two Tales* and *An Impossible Thing*; but the bids for his nine items representing this playwright, who depreciated his work to Voltaire, were well up to standard values. *The Old Bachelour* (1693), $40, *The Double-Dealer* (1694), $25, *Love for Love* (1695), $25, a taller copy $40, and *The Mourning Bride* (1697), $40, were all in modern bindings. When it comes to original boards, pop goes the weasel; and so a fine copy thus of *The Way of the World* (1700) popped up to $150.

Of course Sir William Davenant was here—he of the broken nose which the bloods of his time only flattened the more to flatter their wit. Although much of his poetry is charming—think of

> The lark now leaves his watery nest,
> And climbing shakes his dewy wings—

and although he was willing to proclaim himself a bastard in order to claim Shakespeare as his father, nevertheless he has not the collecting appreciation he deserves. The fact is that collectors have not settled down

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to this period: they are still capricious about these brilliant, gallant, rake-hell playwrights. This was indicated by the prices given for the Thorn-Drury group of Davenants: *The Cruell Brother* (1630), *The Just Italian* (1630), *Britannia Triumphans*, in collaboration with Inigo Jones (1637), *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656), *The Rivals* (1668), *and Poem, to the King's most Sacred Majesty* (1663) varied between $15.50 and $30. For an unbound copy of *The Wits*, first issue, $40 was the bargain bid.

Now for a few single rarities. Richard Flecknoe's anonymously issued *Life of Tomaso the Wanderer* (1667), a biting attack on Killigrew, the dramatist, in what was described as the only copy known of the original edition, reached the amazing final bid of $75—or the price of a new suit. And Nicholas Hookes's anonymous and ever-delightful *Amanda, A Sacrifice To an Unknown Goddesse, or A Free-will Offering of a Loving Heart to a Sweet-Heart* (1653) sold for $50—fifty dollars for having the original edition in which to read such sacrificial hymns as that beginning, you remember,

> There's nought like love that pleaseth me,
> Love, love, Amanda, love to thee:
> My fancie hath no other theam,
> Nor while I 'wake, nor while I dream;

But my pen falters at the thought of these bargains. I hurry on to the interesting Peter Anthony Motteux, a name passed over by nine-tenths of the historians of literature. Yet here were no less than seventeen first editions of his comedies, musical interludes and operas found by the persevering Thorn-Drury who, when not engaged in the far more important business of book-collecting, used to try prisoners at the bar during his ten years Recordership of Dover. These firsts of Motteux beginning with *Love's a Jest* (1696) and ending thirstily with *A Poem upon Tea* (1712) averaged about $2.50 each. A "run" of plays by the handsome Thomas Otway, who began writing them after returning from the wars ragged and starved,

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with his garments full of vermin, averaged much about the same price. Mary Pix is also overlooked in many histories of literature, although this is less to be wondered at than the case of Motteux. Her thirteen first editions gathered by Thorn-Drury brought rather less than did the latter's. They began (or nearly) with *The Innocent Mistress* (1697); went on to *The Deceiver Deceived* (1698) and *The Ruines of Love* (1698); and via *The Double Distress* (1701), to a communication *To the Right Honourable the Earl of Kent* (c.1705). Whether this communication, of which no copy is in the British Museum, had anything to do with the case, I have not yet ascertained; but if every title tells a story, this Bibliography is also a Biography—let us hope, not of Mary who was a comfortable sort, fat and fond of good wine. Pursuing my way alphabetically, it is to record that seven plays of Thomas Southerne, all firsts, averaged about $15 and included *Oroonoko* (1696), which he based on the novel of that name by Mrs. Behn. And I conclude with noting five comedies of William Wycherley, the best bid for which was attracted by *Love in a Wood* (1672) a fine copy, at $40.

* * *

As I left the auction-room I heard curious ghost-like voices. They came from translucent figures. . . . Ah, yes—of course: The Duchess of Cleveland (Wycherley's witch), the Duchess of Marlborough (Congreve's mad mistress), Mrs. Bracegirdle (the Diana of the Cavalier's stage), Mrs. Oldfield (the illustrious actress of Farquhar), Mrs. Barry (who infatuated Otway on and off the boards), and others. . . . They were just saying what they thought of the day's seeming appreciation of their loving and beloved dramatists. . . . But their seventeenth-century language, as they flounced and disappeared into space, I dare not repeat in the chaste pages of the August BOOKMAN.

W. P.

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TYPOGRAPHY, ART, AND DESIGN

THE COLOPHON: A BOOK COLLECTOR'S QUARTERLY. PARTS V *and* VI (THE COLOPHON, $15.00 A YEAR)

With the fifth and sixth numbers of *The Colophon* now at hand, the last sceptic must certainly be convinced of the value of this publication to all lovers of good reading and good printing. As usual, the various articles have been printed in different shops, on differing papers, and in differing styles, each suited to its content. The success of this quarterly in thus presenting a complete cross-section of contemporary printing fully justifies the seeming extravagance of this plan of make-up. It is safe to say that nowhere else could the student find so accessible a variety of typographic specimens of equal interest.

To one without any of the collecting instinct, the game of first editions seems no more fascinating than many another sport less expensive though no less stimulating to the senses and the intellect. This reviewer is personally relieved, therefore, to find *The Colophon* somewhat less preoccupied in its second year with "points", bargains, and other matters connected more with the acquisition of books than with their later enjoyment.

Number Five has the least attractive cover design of the six, but by no means the least interesting contents. Of special importance is the paper by William M. Ivins, Jr., on the work of Honoré Daumier as an illustrator, because of the current widespread interest in the lithographs and paintings of this artist. His designs are really rather poorly adapted to reproduction by woodcut, but it was the only method available for the kind of book in which they appeared, and the triumph of his vigorous draughtsmanship over an unfriendly medium attests to the power and vitality of his talent.

In striking contrast is the precise line of Rudolph Ruzicka, on whose work William A. Kittredge contributes a piece. His drawings seem to me to be perfect and delicate to the point of weakness, and to achieve at best (in his recent copper-engravings) only a quality of agreeable decorativeness.

The other articles in this number range from accounts of their early trials among publishers, by Charles W. Chesnutt and Theodore Dreiser, to a paper on early Italian printers' marks, arranged with a note by Frederic W. Goudy, and set in his latest types. Included are reminiscences of Ned Campion by A. Edward Newton, a few attenuated trivialities rendered readable by the amiable style; a gentle satire by Pierce Butler on the collector who lives by his avocation; and a delightful essay by Elizabeth Robins Pennell on William Ernest Henley.

Part Six, it seems to me, is the best issue that has yet appeared. T. M. Cleland has drawn a fine cover and colophon for it, and the typography of the articles is striking and varied, but always appropriate and business-like, lacking entirely the self-consciousness which marred a few of the sections in last year's numbers.

The outstanding item in Part Six, from the standpoint of the collector, is a paper by Irving S. Underhill in which he claims and establishes a new collation for the first edition of *Huckleberry Finn*. It will cause a stir among Mark Twain enthusiasts, and perhaps a bit of dismay among the dealers.

First in interest for the general reader will come George L. Harding's story of *The Pacific News*, a newspaper of the Frisco gold rush; and Stanley Morison's note on Edward Topham, a journalist and publisher in eight-

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